The KNIGHTS of ANYTOWN

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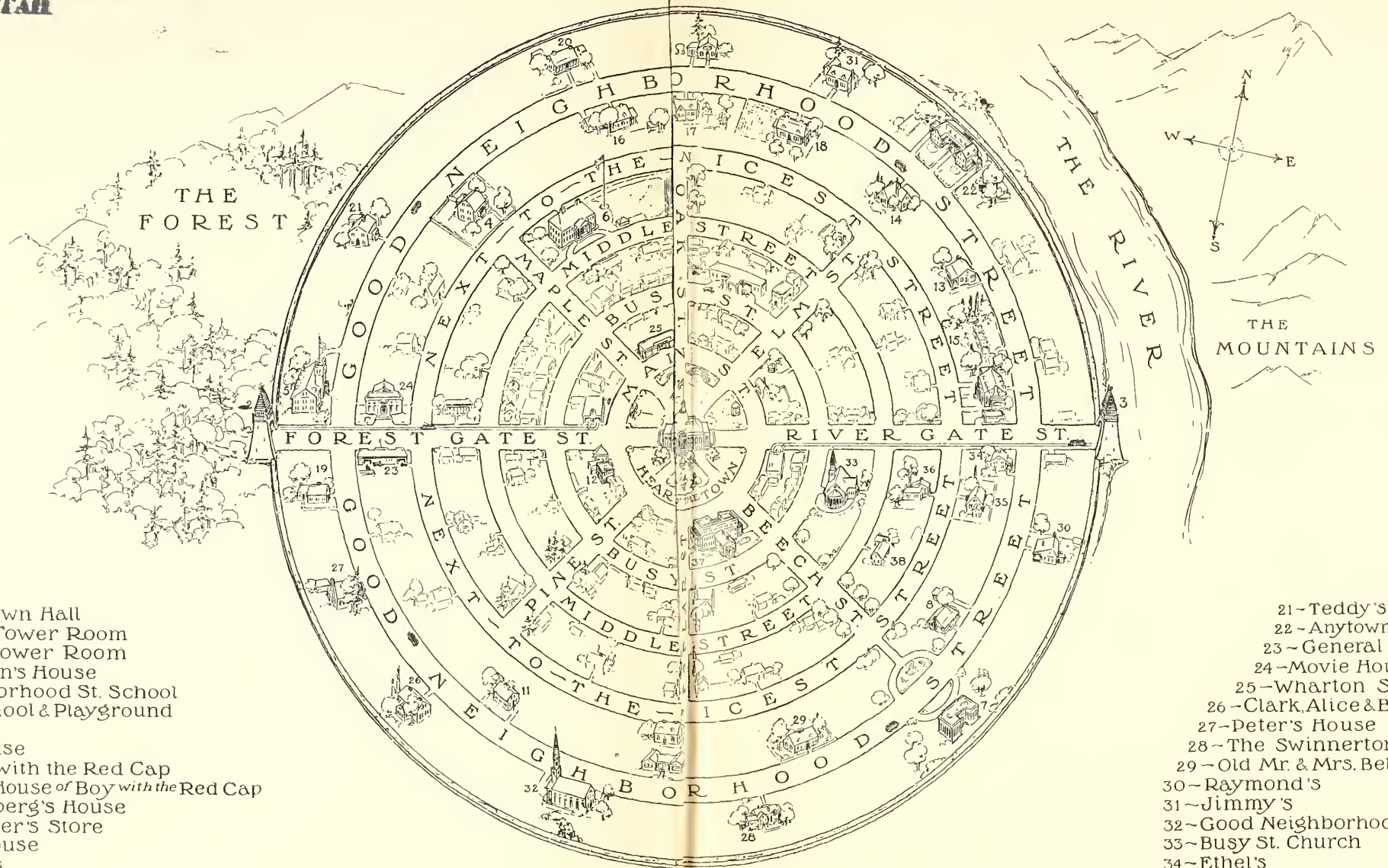
MAP OF ANYTOWN



1~Heart o'the Town Hall
2~Forest Gate Tower Room
3~River Gate Tower Room
4~Molly & Morton's House
5~Good Neighborhood St. School
6~Middle St. School & Playground
7~Library
8~Findley's House
9~House *of* Boy with the Red Cap
10~House *in back of* House *of* Boy *with the* Red Cap
11~Sammy Goldberg's House
12~Sammy's Father's Store
13~Hamilton's House
14~Miss Helpful's
15~Mr. Richman's
16~Marie's
17~Lawrence Hadley's House
18~Mr. Friendly's
19~Emy's
20~Louie's
21~Teddy's
22~Anytown Hospital
23~General Store
24~Movie House
25~Wharton Store
26~Clark, Alice & Bobby Frayser's
27~Peter's House
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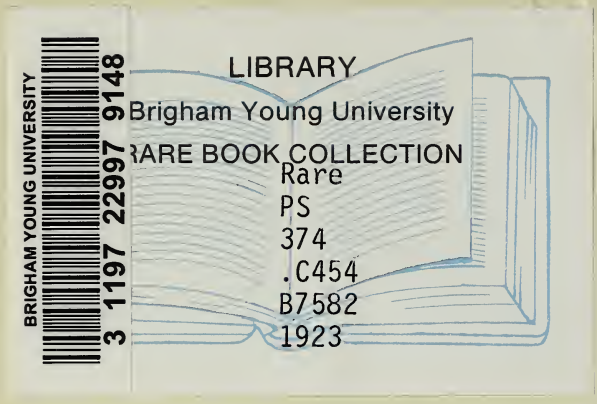
30~Raymond's
31~Jimmy's
32~Good Neighborhood St. Church
33~Busy St. Church
34~Ethel's
35~Laura Belle's & Frederick's
36~Artie's
37~Anytown Hotel
38~Mr. Brown's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THE KNIGHTS OF ANYTOWN

By
JEANETTE ELOISE PERKINS

Illustrated by
FLORENCE LILEY YOUNG

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RHODA and Douglas and Frances and Jewel,
John, and the others, too,
Who have wandered with me through Good Neighborhood Street,
This book is a present to you.

You gave me the stories yourselves, first of all,
And have helped to make them come true;
So now I have gathered them all in a book
And am giving them back to you.

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I

THE KNIGHTS OF THE SILVER SHIELD[1]

(By Raymond MacDonald Alden)

There was once a splendid castle in a forest, with great stone walls and a high gateway, and turrets that rose away above the tallest trees. The forest was dark and dangerous, and many cruel giants lived in it; but in the castle was a company of knights, who were kept there by the king of the country, to help travelers who might be in the forest, and to fight with the giants whenever they could.

Each of these knights wore a beautiful suit of armor and carried a long spear, while over his helmet there floated a great red plume that could be seen a long way off by any one in distress. But the most wonderful thing about the knights' armor was their shields. They were not like those of other knights, but had been made by a great magician

[1] From *Why the Chimes Rang and Other Stories*, by Raymond MacDonald Alden. Copyright, 1908. Used by special permission of the publishers, the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

who had lived in the castle many years before. They were made of silver, and sometimes shone in the sunlight with dazzling brightness; but at other times the surface of the shields would be clouded as though by a mist, and one could not see his face reflected there as he could when they shone brightly.

Now, when each young knight received his spurs and his armor, a new shield was also given him from among those that the magician had made; and when the shield was new, its surface was always cloudy and dull. But as the knight began to do service against the giants, or went on expeditions to help poor travelers in the forest, his shield grew brighter and brighter, so that he could see his face clearly reflected in it. But if he proved to be a lazy or cowardly knight, and let the giants get the better of him, or did not care what became of the travelers, then the shield grew more and more cloudy, until the knight became ashamed to carry it.

But this was not all. When any one of the knights fought a particularly hard battle, and won the victory, or when he went on some hard errand for the lord of the castle, and was successful, not only did his silver shield grow brighter, but when one looked into the center of it

he could see something like a golden star shining in its very heart. This was the greatest honor that a knight could achieve, and the other knights always spoke of such a one as having "won his star." It was usually not till he was pretty old and tried as a soldier that he could win it. At the time when this story begins, the lord of the castle himself was the only one of the knights whose shield bore the golden star.

There came a time when the worst of the giants in the forest gathered themselves together to have a battle against the knights. They made a camp in a dark hollow not far from the castle, and gathered all their best warriors together, and all the knights made ready to fight them. The windows of the castle were closed and barred; the air was full of the noise of armor being made ready for use; and the knights were so excited that they could scarcely rest or eat.

Now there was a young knight in the castle, named Sir Roland, who was among those most eager for the battle. He was a splendid warrior, with eyes that shone like stars whenever there was anything to do in the way of knightly deeds. And although he was still quite young, his shield had begun to shine enough to show plainly that he had

done bravely in some of his errands through the forest. This battle, he thought, would be the great opportunity of his life. And on the morning of the day when they were to go forth to it, and all the knights assembled in the great hall of the castle to receive the commands of their leaders, Sir Roland hoped that he would be put in the most dangerous place of all, so that he could show what knightly stuff he was made of.

But when the lord of the castle came to him, as he went about in full armor giving his commands, he said, "One brave knight must stay behind and guard the gateway of the castle, and it is you, Sir Roland, being one of the youngest, whom I have chosen for this."

At these words Sir Roland was so disappointed that he bit his lip, and closed his helmet over his face so that the other knights might not see it. For a moment he felt as if he must reply angrily to the commander, and tell him that it was not right to leave so sturdy a knight behind, when he was eager to fight. But he struggled against this feeling, and went quietly to look after his duties at the gate. The gateway was high and narrow, and was reached from outside by a high, narrow bridge that crossed the moat which surrounded the castle on every side. When an

enemy approached, the knight on guard rang a great bell just inside the gate, and the bridge was drawn up against the castle wall, so that no one could come across the moat. So the giants had long ago given up trying to attack the castle itself.

Today the battle was to be in the dark hollow in the forest, and it was not likely that there would be anything to do at the castle gate, except to watch it like a common doorkeeper. It was not strange that Sir Roland thought some one else might have done this.

Presently all the other knights marched out in their flashing armor, their red plumes waving over their heads, and their spears in their hands. The lord of the castle stopped only to tell Sir Roland to keep guard over the gate until they had all returned, and to let no one enter. Then they went into the shadows of the forest, and were soon lost to sight.

Sir Roland stood looking after them long after they had gone, thinking how happy he would be if he were on the way to battle like them. But after a little he put this out of his mind, and tried to think of pleasanter things. It was a long time before anything happened, or any word came from the battle.

At last Sir Roland saw one of the knights come limping down the path to the castle, and he went out on the bridge to meet him. Now this knight was not a brave one, and he had been frightened away as soon as he was wounded.

"I have been hurt," he said, "so that I cannot fight any more. But I could watch the gate for you, if you would like to go back in my place."

At first Sir Roland's heart leaped with joy at this, but then he remembered what the commander had told him on going away, and he said, "I should like to go, but a knight belongs where his commander has put him. My place is here at the gate, and I cannot open it even for you. Your place is at the battle."

The knight was ashamed when he heard this, and he presently turned about and went into the forest again.

So Sir Roland kept guard silently for another hour. Then there came an old beggar woman down the path to the castle, and asked Sir Roland if she might come in and have some food. He told her that no one could enter the castle that day, but that he would send a servant out to her with food, and that she might sit and rest as long as she would.

"I have been past the hollow in the forest where the

battle is going on," said the old woman, while she was waiting for her food.

"And how do you think it is going?" asked Sir Roland.

"Badly for the knights, I am afraid," said the old woman. "The giants are fighting as they have never fought before. I should think you had better go and help your friends."

"I should like to, indeed," said Sir Roland. "But I am set to guard the gateway of the castle, and cannot leave."

"One fresh knight would make a great difference when they are all weary with fighting," said the old woman. "I should think that, while there are no enemies about, you would be much more useful there."

"You may well think so," said Sir Roland, "and so may I; but it is neither you nor I that is commander here."

"I suppose," said the old woman then, "that you are one of the kind of knights who like to keep out of fighting. You are lucky to have so good an excuse for staying at home." And she laughed a thin and taunting laugh.

Then Sir Roland was very angry, and thought that if it were only a man instead of a woman, he would show him whether he liked fighting or no. But as it was a woman, he

shut his lips and set his teeth hard together, and as the servant came just then with the food he had sent for, he gave it to the old woman quickly, and shut the gate that she might not talk to him any more.

It was not very long before he heard some one calling outside. Sir Roland opened the gate and saw standing at the other end of the drawbridge a little old man in a long black cloak.

"Why are you knocking here?" he said. "The castle is closed today."

"Are you Sir Roland?" said the little old man.

"Yes," said Sir Roland.

"Then you ought not to be staying here when your commander and his knights are having so hard a struggle with the giants, and when you have the chance to make of yourself the greatest knight in this kingdom. Listen to me! I have brought you a magic sword."

As he said this, the old man drew from under his coat a wonderful sword that flashed in the sunlight as if it were covered with diamonds.

"This is the sword of all swords," he said, "and it is for you, if you leave your idling here by the castle gate, and carry it to the battle. Nothing can stand before it. When

you lift it the giants will fall back, your master will be saved, and you will be crowned the victorious knight—the one who will soon take his commander's place as lord of the castle."

Now Sir Roland believed that it was a magician who was speaking to him, for it certainly appeared to be a magic sword. It seemed so wonderful that the sword should be brought to him, that he reached out his hand as though he would take it, and the little old man came forward, as though he would cross the drawbridge into the castle. But as he did so, it came to Sir Roland's mind again that that bridge and the gateway had been intrusted to him, and he called out "No!" to the old man, so that he stopped where he was standing. But he waved the shining sword in the air again, and said, "It is for you! Take it, and win the victory!"

Sir Roland was really afraid that if he looked any longer at the sword, or listened to any more words of the old man, he would not be able to hold himself within the castle. For this reason he struck the great bell at the gateway, which was the signal for the servants inside to pull in the chains of the drawbridge, and instantly they began to pull, and the drawbridge came up, so that the old man

could not cross it to enter the castle, nor Sir Roland to go out.

Then as he looked across the moat Sir Roland saw a wonderful thing. The little old man threw off his black cloak, and as he did so he began to grow bigger and bigger, until in a minute more he was a giant as tall as any in the forest. At first Sir Roland could scarcely believe his eyes. Then he realized that this must be one of their giant enemies, who had changed himself to a little old man through some magic power, that he might make his way into the castle while all the knights were away. Sir Roland shuddered to think what might have happened if he had taken the sword and left the gate unguarded. The giant shook his fist across the moat that lay between them, and then, knowing that he could do nothing more, he went angrily back into the forest.

Sir Roland now resolved not to open the gate again, and to pay no attention to any other visitor. But it was not long before he heard a sound that made him spring forward in joy. It was the bugle of the lord of the castle, and there came sounding after it the bugles of many of the knights that were with him, pealing so joyfully that Sir Roland was sure they were safe and happy. As

they came nearer, he could hear their shouts of victory. So he gave the signal to let down the drawbridge again, and went out to meet them. They were dusty and blood-stained and weary, but they had won the battle with the giants; and it had been such a great victory that there had never been a happier home-coming.

Sir Roland greeted them all as they passed in over the bridge, and then, when he had closed the gate and fastened it, he followed them into the great hall of the castle. The lord of the castle took his place on the highest seat, with the other knights about him, and Sir Roland came forward with the key of the gate, to give his account of what he had done in the place to which the commander had appointed him.

The lord of the castle bowed to him as a sign for him to begin, but just as he opened his mouth to speak, one of the knights cried out, "The shield! the shield! Sir Roland's shield!"

Every one turned and looked at the shield which Sir Roland carried on his left arm. He himself could see only the top of it, and did not know what they could mean. But what they saw was the golden star of knighthood, shining brightly from the center of Sir Roland's shield.

There had never been such amazement in the castle before.

Sir Roland knelt before the lord of the castle to receive his commands. He still did not know why every one was looking at him so excitedly, and wondered if he had in some way done wrong.

"Speak, Sir Knight," said the commander as soon as he could find his voice after his surprise, "and tell us all that has happened today at the castle. Have you been attacked? Have any giants come hither? Did you fight them alone?"

"No, my lord," said Sir Roland. "Only one giant has been here, and he went away silently when he found he could not enter."

Then he told all that had happened through the day.

When he had finished the knights all looked at one another, but no one spoke a word. Then they looked again at Sir Roland's shield, to make sure that their eyes had not deceived them, and there the golden star was still shining.

After a little silence the lord of the castle spoke.

"Men make mistakes," he said, "but our silver shields

are never mistaken. Sir Roland has fought and won the hardest battle of all today."

Then the others all arose and saluted Sir Roland, who was the youngest knight that ever carried the golden star.

II

INTRODUCING THE CHILDREN OF GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD STREET, THEIR ANGEL, AND THE GIANTS

Oh, Heart o' the Town is the part o' the town
That belongs to you and to me,
And every one knows it's the place that shows
What you want your city to be!

The children I shall tell you of lived miles and miles away from here, and in a place where people used a different kind of calendar from ours, so we have no way of telling what year it was, 1923, or 1850, or 2051.

They dated things by what happened. They would say, "John must go to the dentist's; he hasn't been since Heart o' the Town was nearly burned," or, "The baby was born the week before Ethel drove away the Selfish Giant," or, "The next picnic will be the day after Teddy wins his star." And if you ask me, I think it is a very sensible way, and much more interesting than plain January, 1835, or June, 1919.

The name of the city was Anytown, and if you visited it I suppose it would look much like this town, if we had a

river on one side and a forest on the other, and the principal streets, instead of going straight, went around in a circle. The houses looked like ours, and so did the people.

In the very center of the town was a park. It was in the shape of a circle, of course, and Main Street, which was the first street, and where the hotel and Wharton's big store were, went all around it. In the park was a big public playground, where children could swing and race and teeter and slide, and a pond where they could wade and sail their boats. There was a beautiful big white building, too, in the park, where old and young met for good times in winter, and where the Christmas parties were held. I must tell you about the first Christmas party sometime.

The name of the beautiful park was Heart o' the Town, and the big white building was Heart o' the Town Hall.

There were parks and playgrounds and halls on other streets, too, but they belonged only to those streets. Heart o' the Town belonged to every one. Every single person in Anytown had helped to make it beautiful, and each one was so proud of it that he took great pains to keep it beautiful. If the wind blew, the children would run out-of-doors and pick up any stray papers on their lawns or sidewalks, for fear they might be blown over to Heart o'

the Town, and make it untidy. The river which flowed around one side of the city was kept clear and pure, for a pipe led from it to the pond and drinking fountain in this park, and everything in Heart o' the Town must be clean and good.

All around Anytown was a stone wall. The wall had two gates, the River Gate and the Forest Gate. A Keeper stood at each one, and although visitors to the city were welcome, they must first show their passports.

Strangers entering by one of these gates found themselves at once on Good Neighborhood Street, the nicest street in the town. It was, of course, the longest, for it went all the way around the city. One thing which made it so desirable was its view. Whether you looked out across the river to the blue mountains beyond, or into the green forest with its tall fir-trees, it was beautiful. Another thing was the appearance of the street itself. The houses were all pretty, the lawns were tidy, the gardens here and there made the street bright and colorful, and the children playing about were happy and clean. Besides this, Forest Gate Street and River Gate Street were the only streets that ran through it, which meant only two crossings, and consequently very few accidents.

Now Good Neighborhood Street had a guardian angel. I suppose all streets have guardian angels if people would only recognize them. Everybody on Good Neighborhood Street recognized this one, and the children called him their Neighborhood Angel. They loved him dearly, for he was always helping them in one way or another. He carried a big Book with him wherever he went, and when children asked him questions, he would often say, "It is written"—and then open the Book and find the answer. It seemed as if that Book held an answer to nearly every question any one could ask. Often the Angel read them stories from this Book, and at other times he would tell them of strange and wonderful adventures and suggest the most fascinating and interesting things for them to do. So usually they tried very hard to please him.

At the time I am telling you of, however, the Neighborhood Angel was very sad, because the children on Good Neighborhood Street had not been trying, and as a result the whole city, even to Heart o' the Town, was made miserable. For whatever affected the city, you must know, affected Heart o' the Town the worst of all. This is how it happened:

If you wanted to make a town a safe and healthful place

to live in, you would make some rules for people to follow, wouldn't you? Well, that's exactly what the lawmakers of Anytown did. The rules showed well people how to keep well, and sick people how to grow better, and they told every one how to keep diseases from spreading from one person to another.

Somehow or other measles came to Anytown. Nobody knew how they came, or where they came from, but as soon as people knew that Molly and Morton on Good Neighborhood Street had them, they did everything they could to keep them from going farther.

In public places they put printed rules, saying that children with measles should stay at home from school; that they should not visit other children, nor should other children visit them. They put big posters at all the entrances to Heart o' the Town, asking children with measles to please keep out, for it would be a dreadful thing if their beloved park, which was always kept sweet and safe for people to enjoy, should have in it anything as horrid as measles. Molly and Morton had a bright red placard on their house, which said in big letters,—

MEASLES

It had been there for nearly two weeks, and warned the people to keep away from there.

All the mothers on Good Neighborhood Street had said to their children, "Molly and Morton have the measles. We mustn't let it spread, so do not play with them until the sign has been taken away from their door."

And Molly and Morton's mother had said to Molly and Morton, "We mustn't let the measles spread, you know, so do not play with any other children until the sign is taken away from our door."

It was nearly two weeks since Molly and Morton had seen any of their playmates. For a while they had been too sick to care, but they were getting well now, and were wishing they could go to school again and see some one besides each other. For the last two days, which had been warm and sunny, their mother had let them play outdoors in their big back yard. Today the telephone had called her away to see their grandmother, who needed her.

She had come to the back door and said, "Will you be good children, dears, and play here in the yard while I run over and see what grandmother wants?"

"Yes, mother," they had answered, and she had gone.

"I'm tired of playing house," said Molly, after a little. "Let's play Hide-and-Seek."

So Morton was It, and Molly looked for a hiding-place. She thought of a cluster of fir-trees on the lawn in front of the house. They were close together and the branches were thick.

"I'll hide there," Molly thought; "he'll never find me." Quickly she ran around the house, parted the branches of the trees, slipped into the center of the cluster, and called, "Coo-oop!"

It seemed forever and ever before she heard Morton come around to the front of the house. When at last he did, he kept away from the fir-trees. First he looked all through the hedge at the side of the lawn; then, by peering through the branches, Molly could see him hunting among the shrubs near the front gate. Suddenly he stopped.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello," answered a Stranger Boy.

"Where are you going?" asked Morton.

"I'm running away," answered the Stranger Boy.

"Where are you running to?" Morton asked.

"Oh, a place where I can have some fun!" was the answer.

The conversation was growing interesting. Molly decided to leave her hiding-place and run to the gate.

"He's running away," Morton told her as she joined them. "Wish we could run away. I'm tired of staying around here."

Molly looked at the red sign on their door. So did Morton. So did the Stranger Boy.

"We're 'most well now," she murmured, "but mother —"

"Come on and run away with me," said the Stranger Boy.

"He's going to a place where we can have some fun," Morton put in,—"and we're 'most well."

Before another minute Molly and Morton were on the other side of the gate, and the three, hand in hand, were running down the street, past the school. It was Saturday, but the school yard had a playground in it. It was full of children using the parallel bars, playing ball, and swinging.

"Oh, look!" cried one, "there are Molly and Morton."

"Is your sign down?" called another.

"No, but we're 'most well," Molly answered.

"Where are you going?" the children asked.

"Oh, to a great place, where we can have some fun!" Morton announced. "Come with us."

They hesitated an instant. The sign was not down yet. But here were Molly and Morton looking as well as ever. It had been a long time since they had all played together.

"Come on!" cried one, and jumped down from the bars. The others followed. Down Forest Gate Street they went, crossed Next-to-the-Nicest Street, and came to Middle Street. Here the Stranger Boy led them to another playground where games of all sorts were going on. Quickly the children from Good Neighborhood Street joined them, and for a while they had a gay time, playing London Bridge and Garden Scamp and Cat-and-Rat. Suddenly Molly found herself growing very tired. She even fell down when she was being chased by the Cat and felt almost too tired to pick herself up. Morton helped her.

"Let's go home," he whispered.

He was growing uncommonly tired himself. So they said good-bye to their playmates and started for home. It seemed a very long way. They dragged one foot after another, barely speaking. They hoped their mother would

The Three . . . Were Running Down the Street

be there to make them feel better, and put them to bed. As they opened their front gate and came slowly up the walk they said nothing at all, for the red sign stared at them and made them both too ashamed.

Their mother had not come home yet, but she did come a few minutes later. When she saw them huddled up on the couch and looking very white, she cried, "Why, children! what have you been doing to make you so tired?"

The children burst into tears as they told her. Her face grew sadder and sadder while she listened. She did not need to tell them that because of their disobedience all the children on Good Neighborhood Street might be as sick as they had been, and not only those children, but the Middle Street children too. They knew, and the thought made them cry still harder.

As they climbed into bed, Molly whispered to Morton, "O Morton, supposing measles should reach Heart o' the Town on account of us!"

Morton had been thinking the same thing, but he said, "Oh, they couldn't! We only got as far as Middle Street, you know."

What Morton did not know was that a few days later a great festival was to be given in Heart o' the Town, that

little boys and girls from all over the city would be present, and that the beginnings of the measles which Molly and Morton had given to the children of Good Neighborhood Street and Middle Street would be carried to Heart o' the Town, and given there to boys and girls from every part of the city. No wonder Anytown was miserable, and no wonder the Neighborhood Angel was sad!

When at last the measles had disappeared, the Neighborhood Angel called together all the children of Good Neighborhood Street. They met in a big Tower Room on the city wall.

"In the first place," began the Neighborhood Angel, "the name of our street must be changed."

"Changed!" the children all cried in dismay. They were proud of living on a street with such a name.

"Changed," said the Angel firmly. "You certainly want to tell the truth about your street, don't you?"

"Of course," the children nodded, wondering what was coming.

"Well, you surely don't think the street is a good neighborhood, do you?"

The children made no answer.

"What makes a good neighborhood, anyway?" he went on.

Bobby said nice houses. Ethel said tidy lawns. Egbert said clean children.

"I didn't say a pretty neighborhood," the Angel explained; "I said a good neighborhood."

Well, what would you have answered yourselves, if you'd been there? Wouldn't you have said obeying and being unselfish and careful and polite?

Those are exactly the things those children said!

The Angel listened. Then he asked, "Do you think children have anything to do with making a neighborhood a good one or a bad one?" He seemed to be remembering something, for he went on, without waiting for them to answer, "I should think they have! Why, if you could visit some of the places I do and hear what people say! Just the other day I heard a woman in another town say, 'Oh, dear me, no, I should never live on that street! It's a very undesirable neighborhood. It's full of children, and *such* children!' I didn't ask her what she meant by 'such,' but it sounded as though the children had a great deal to do with making that neighborhood what it was."

He took a big white paper and a piece of black chalk in his hands.

"Let's write down here," he said, "some of the ways children can make a good neighborhood."

Then he printed across the top:

To Make the Kind of Neighborhood Which Every One Will Say is Good the Children Living in it Should —

Now what should *you* have put down there—obey, be polite, be honest, be careful?

Those are some of the very same things the children told the Neighborhood Angel to write. When he came to "Obey" he stopped a moment.

Then he said, "Do you think our street has been a good neighborhood lately?"

Every single child hung his head. They were all thinking how they had disobeyed, first their mothers, and then the rules of the town, when Molly and Morton had the measles.

Suddenly Morton stood up.

"O Neighborhood Angel!" he said, "I see what you

mean about changing the name of the street. Maybe it isn't true now, but can't we make it true, to show we're sorry?"

The Neighborhood Angel's face was beautiful to see.

"Dear children," he asked, "do you all feel that way?"

"Yes, yes," came a hundred voices, and "I do!" "Oh, I do!" from every direction.

"Then," said the Angel decidedly, "the only thing to do is to get rid of the Giants."

"Giants!" the children echoed.

"Yes, Giants," repeated the Angel. "If the street is made free from Giants it can keep its name. Do you see this list?" He pointed to the paper on which he had been writing. "For every one of these things you've said are needed to make a good neighborhood, there's a Giant who does his best to prevent it."

"Where do they live?" asked Merrill.

"In the forest, and across the river," answered the Angel.

"How do they get into Anytown?" Elizabeth wanted to know.

"You let them in."

"*We* let them in!"

"Of course," explained the Angel, "they can't get in through the regular gates, for they haven't any passports, but they sneak in through other gates."

"But Forest Gate and River Gate are the only two there are," objected the children.

"The only public gates," agreed the Angel. "It's your own private gates, near each of your houses, that I'm speaking of."

The children looked at each other in surprise. They hadn't the faintest idea that there were private gates in the wall.

"Look," said the Angel, and to one after another he showed his wonder glasses, which, when the children looked through them, showed little gates all along the wall near their own houses.

"Every child here," the Angel went on, "is his own gatekeeper. When you're thinking about the gate, you're on guard. When you forget about it, or think it isn't important to guard it, you're off guard, and that is the time the Giants open it a crack, and slip in."

"What do they do when they get in?" the children asked eagerly.

"Well, they find themselves on Good Neighborhood

Street first, and do all the mischief they can on the way to Heart o' the Town, for that is the place they're really bound for. They don't like their homes outside. They're just aching to take Heart o' the Town for their home."

"Oh! oh!" cried the children at the awful thought, "Giants in Heart o' the Town! Oh, we can't let them take it!"

"That's just it," said the Angel; "you can't. If you children can drive them out of town while they're still here on Good Neighborhood Street, and before they can reach River Gate Street, or Forest Gate Street, they can't ever get as far as Heart o' the Town, of course, so it's you who can save the city. Dear me!" He looked at the sun. "It's time I was going."

"Oh, don't go!" the children pleaded. "Tell us more—what the Giants look like, and how we can drive them away, and everything."

"I'm sorry, dears," said the Angel, "but I must leave now. I'll just tell you, though, before I go, that they have a great many different names. Every time you disobey, you let in one of the Disobedient Giants. Every time you decide to please yourselves instead of other people, you let in one of the Selfish Giants. The Truth Haters are

some of the worst. There is a whole tribe of them, but I'll tell you the names of the rest when I come again. Just now the whole city is full of Giants of the Never-Mind and Won't-Obey tribe, and it really looks as if they might take the city by storm. But there's a way to drive them out."

"How?" cried the children. "Tell us how!"

The Angel opened his Book. "'It is written,'" he began, and then read, " 'He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.' You see, I can help you about everything if you really want to be helped. It's my business to take care of you. Just send for me and I'll come at once."

"But how do we send for you?" the children asked.

"Oh, just close your eyes, and think about the Father of all children, and ask him to send his Angel, and I'll come! 'Father, send thine Angel,' you can say, and maybe you won't see me, but I'll be there. And I'll help you drive away those Giants. Every time you think one's around—you can tell, because they whisper to you not to mind, or advise you not to obey—just send for me quickly and then turn around and say, 'I *will* mind!' like that, and they'll disappear in a flash. When they

can't get children to heed them they either die on the spot for shame, or run just as fast as they can back to their homes."

"I'd just love to kill one dead," said Molly.

"It's great fun to watch them shrivel up," said the Angel. "The more you laugh at them the more ashamed they are. I'll tell you what I'll do," he offered. "I'll give you each a little present to remind you that I can help you if you want me."

"Goody!" said the children, for though the Angel had told them before that he would come to them if they called him, it seemed as if they always forgot when they needed him most.

Into each outstretched hand the Angel placed the secret reminder—a little card on which were printed in gold letters these words,—

IT IS WRITTEN

"Remember the rest of it is your secret," said the Angel. " 'It is written, he will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.' Now," he said, in a tone that meant something interesting was coming, "if you can rid this street of the Disobedient Giants, I'll let you see

some of them and the others in their homes the next time I come. They're very small until they've come through the wall, but my glasses show them clearly. And I'll tell you all their names. Will you try? Good!"

For every single child had said, "I'll try!"

III

SAMMY GOLDBERG AND THE BOY WITH THE RED CAP

To make the kind of neighborhood
(Heigh-oh, for I know!)
That every one will say is good,
(Heigh-oh, for I know!)
We'll keep the Angel's shields about.
(Heigh-oh, for I know!)
It helps us drive the Giants out.
(Heigh-oh, for I know!)

Story Hour at the library was just over. The children were thronging down the steps.

"Hi, Findley!" shouted Max to a boy across the street. "Why didn't you come to the Story Hour?"

"Couldn't," answered Findley briefly. "Mother said she wanted me to stay outdoors this afternoon."

The others nodded understandingly. They knew what that meant. If Findley's mother wanted him to stay outdoors, she had a good reason for it, and of course he could not go to the Story Hour; for wasn't every child on Good

Neighborhood Street working with might and main to drive the Disobedient Giants from Anytown? Every single one had promised the Neighborhood Angel to help. That was why the children, instead of calling out to Findley, "Oh, you don't know what you missed!" answered, "Good for you, Findley!" and crossed the street to tell him about the stories.

"There was one about a queen," began Helen. "Her name was Esther. She saved all the Jews because she was so brave."

"There was a man the king liked," went on Bert. "His name was Haman. And what do you think? Just because he was the king's favorite, he thought he was the whole thing, and he said, 'Everybody's got to bow down to me when I pass by.' "

"Yes, but everybody *didn't*," Raymond broke in. "There was a man. His name was Mordecai. Catch him bowing! He sat at the palace gate every day, and when Haman passed, he just wouldn't. My, but didn't it make Haman mad! He found out that Mordecai was a Jew, and he was so cross at him he wanted to kill every Jew in the whole kingdom."

"Just to pay Mordecai back?" asked Findley.

"Just to pay Mordecai back," answered Johnny.

"And he pretty nearly did it, too," said Helen. "He went to the king and told him there were people who didn't obey the laws, and asked what should be done to them. And the king, who wasn't thinking, I guess, said, 'Anything you like. Here's my ring,' and gave Haman his ring to stamp the order with. And then that wicked Haman wrote an order to kill every single Jew there was."

"Just because Mordecai wouldn't bow to him?" asked Findley again. He couldn't believe it.

"He just thought he'd get even with him," said Johnny.

"And that's where Queen Esther came in," explained Winifred. "She was a Jew, but the king didn't know it. And it was against the law to go in and speak to the king unless you were sent for; you might even get killed for it. But when she heard what Haman was doing she just had to go and ask him to save her people. And she hadn't been sent for for a long time. She must have been awfully scared, for unless the king held out his golden scepter to you, like this,"—Winifred graciously held out her hand which seemed to all who were listening to have in it a beautiful golden scepter "—it showed he was cross with you for interrupting. But she was so pretty that he loved

her to pieces and when he saw her he did hold out his scepter right away."

"Well," asked Findley, "was she in time to save the people?"

"Yes," said one little boy, who had not spoken before, "and he was so angry at Haman that he gave Mordecai his place. I've heard the story before."

The children turned to look at the boy who was speaking. His name was Sammy Goldberg. He had not lived on Good Neighborhood Street long, and except for the Neighborhood Angel, he had no friends there. The boys he knew lived down near the center of the town, for until a little while ago Sammy's home had been over his father's store on Main Street.

" 'Course he's heard it," said a boy with a red cap near by, pointing at Sammy, "because he's a Sheeny too."

There was silence for a whole minute. Everybody was too surprised to speak, and too ashamed of the Boy with the Red Cap, and too sorry for Sammy. Sammy himself had turned very red, and his eyes looked as if they might have tears in them.

Then a little girl spoke. It was Martha. Every one loved Martha.

"Queen Esther was a Jew," said Martha, "and she was a great deal better than Haman, who wasn't. Maybe Sammy's lots nicer than some of us," and she looked straight at the Boy with the Red Cap.

"Come on, let's fight him for calling Sammy names," cried Billy, but the Boy with the Red Cap was ashamed, and had run away.

Billy turned to Sammy. "I'd like to see anybody call me names," he said. "I'd send him right through the roof."

"If I were you," suggested Bobby, "I'd run after him and give him the worst licking he ever had."

"Anybody that makes *me* mad," boasted Ted, "had better look out or he'll get his head knocked right off."

Sammy said nothing, but started toward his home. His feelings had been badly hurt. He had thought when his father and mother bought the pretty new house on Good Neighborhood Street that he would soon find friends among the children who lived there. But one of them, instead, had called him Sheeny. He hated to be called that.

The other children stayed to tell Findley about the Story Hour. Sammy walked on. He had to pass the home of the Boy with the Red Cap. He hoped he should not see

him again. He would rather meet anybody just then than the Boy with the Red Cap.

Suddenly a breeze brought him an odor of smoke. Sammy sniffed. Somebody was probably having a bonfire. It was a pretty windy day to be having a bonfire, Sammy thought. Another whiff came to him. He decided to investigate. There was no bonfire in sight. But he was sure he smelled smoke. He hurried on toward the house of the Boy with the Red Cap, and at every step the smoke was stronger. It must be coming from that very house. Nobody seemed to be about. He ran up the steps and rang the bell. No answer. He tried the door. It was locked. What should he do? He hesitated. After all, why should he care if the house of the Boy with the Red Cap burned down? Here was a good chance to get even with him for calling him Sheeny. He could just go right along home and if the house was on fire, it could burn down. What business was it of his?

Just then he seemed to hear in Findley's unbelieving voice, "*He did that just to get even?*"

How Sammy had hated that wicked Haman when he first heard about him! And yet—here he was thinking of a way to get even, too. Still, this was different. Haman was

going to hurt lots of other people besides the one he wanted to punish. Sammy caught his breath. What about the mother of the Boy with the Red Cap? And the father? And the baby sister, who had never done anything to hurt Sammy? Supposing the fire should spread to the house back of Sammy's, on Next-to-the-Nicest Street, and then, for it was a windy day, farther and farther until—oh, horrors!—until it reached Heart o' the Town itself!

He saw now what the Neighborhood Angel meant when he had said that wrong thoughts and deeds which started in Good Neighborhood Street might spread and reach even to Heart o' the Town. The Neighborhood Angel! Sammy put his hand in his pocket. There was the little card the Angel had given him. "It is written," it said, and Sammy remembered the rest—"he will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

His heart beat fast as he thought of the Angel and said, "Oh, come quickly and help me!"

Then something seemed to get into his legs, and make him rush around the house, looking in one window after another. He reached the laundry at last, and saw a sight which made him give a loud cry.

An electric iron which somebody had forgotten to disconnect had burned its way through the ironing board and fallen to the floor. It was burning a hole in the floor now, while flames were creeping along the sheets on the board, and down the wooden standard. Even while Sammy looked it collapsed, and a big flame sent out its tongue to lick up a pile of clothes hanging over a chair.

"Help! Fire!" cried Sammy, forgetting that it was the home of the Boy with the Red Cap, and remembering only Good Neighborhood Street, and Heart o' the Town, and the Angel, "*Help! Fire!*"

He ran to the next house and gave the alarm; then to the street. Two men passing heard him and hurried back with him. While they and the next-door neighbors were working to smother the flames, the fire company came and their great hose put out even the smallest spark.

It was all over very quickly. The house was safe and unhurt except for the laundry, and when the owners came at last they looked in vain for the person to thank, for Sammy had gone home. Men told them that a little boy had given the alarm, but they did not even know his name.

One never knew when the Neighborhood Angel might turn up. That was one delightful thing about him. Of course the children felt him near them when they needed his help, but his meetings in the Tower Room, when he talked to them together, were always a surprise.

The children were particularly anxious to have him visit them now, partly because they had all worked very hard to drive the Disobedient Giants from Anytown, and they knew he would be pleased, and partly because, as you will remember, he had promised on his very next visit to let them look through his wonder glasses, and see the Giants in their homes in the forest and across the river.

And one day he came!

"You are dear children," he said. "You have tried hard, and even with my wonder glasses I can't see a Disobedient Giant on the street. Let's see," he said, pretending he had forgotten, "weren't we going to do something special today?"

"The Giants! The wonder glasses!" the children all shouted at the top of their lungs, until the Angel had to stop his ears, they made so much noise.

"Why, to be sure!" said the Angel. "How could it have

slipped my mind!" and he started to open a huge box on the floor.

"I ordered a crate of them," he explained, "for one pair of glasses would never in the world go around. Here you are!" and to each child, to the delight of them all, he gave a pair of wonder glasses.

"Oh, oh!" came squeals of surprise, as one child after another looked toward the forest, "I see them, but they're so little!"

"I told you they were little, over there," the Angel reminded them. "It's only when you let them through the wall that they grow big and dangerous. And the farther into the town they come the bigger and more powerful they grow. Those green ones are the Selfish Giants. I love to have any one get ahead of them. Next to them the Disobedient Giants usually live. You can see what's happened to them, though. The few that are left look starved to death. They're dreadfully thin and weak. I've never seen them so delightfully shriveled."

"Hurrah!" shouted the children who had helped to shrivel them.

"Who are those lazy ones asleep under the trees?" Bobby asked.

"Those are the twins, Put-It-Off and Wait-a-Minute. They have a large following," explained the Angel. "Next is I-Don't-Care; next to him, Scared-To-Death. The Tattlers are very unpleasant, Tell-On-'Em and Somebody Said.

"Over across the river," he went on, "are the Truth Haters. See their pretty silver and blue coats? But look, there's one raising his arm. You can see the black lining. There are any number of them. There's old Giant Break-Your-Promise, and It-Might-Be-True, and Don't-Tell and the Trespassers and the Stealers—oh, any number! Near them live some brothers who have a whole band of followers, very powerful, when they're full size. Their names are Pay-Him-Back and Get-Even. Why—why, they're *not there!* Who has driven them away?" He looked around at the children. No one spoke.

"I think," said the Angel kindly, "that we need our armor. It's the only way of knowing some things." And then he told the children the story which you have all heard, about the Knights of the Silver Shield.

"The fact is," he ended, "I happen to have a number of shields of this very sort," and he opened a door of a secret room.

It was piled high with shields, helmets and spears. The children crowded around the Angel expectantly. To each child the Angel gave a full set of the magic armor, but it was dull, like the armor of the knights in the story.

When they were all distributed the Angel said, "These are mystic shields, and can grow bright only by brave and fine deeds. Somebody, since I was here last, has destroyed the powerful Giants, Pay-Him-Back and Get-Even. Let's look at the shields and let them tell us who it was. Remember, they never make mistakes."

One shield alone glowed with a silvery brightness which looked as if some one must have just polished it.

"Sammy!" the children cried in surprise, and looked enviously and admiringly at the shield.

"Whe-ew!" whistled the Boy with the Red Cap, "and I called him Sheeny."

"Yes," said Billy and Ted together, "and we wanted him to get even with you, and fight, and he wouldn't."

"Why," one of the children exclaimed, as a thought suddenly struck him, "maybe that's when he drove away those old Giants!"

Sammy looked at the Angel. The Angel smiled. Sammy

smiled, too, for he and the Angel had a secret. The rest of the children knew that Sammy would not fight the boy who had called him names, but nobody but the Angel and Sammy knew that he had saved that boy's house from burning—and *maybe Heart o' the Town itself.*

IV

HAMILTON'S HALLOWE'EN PUMPKIN

If it belongs to some one else, we know it isn't ours,
A painted fence, a swinging gate, our neighbors' fruit,
or flowers.
If we would keep the Giants out, we'd better leave alone
All property of any kind that isn't quite our own.

Anytown was to have a Hallowe'en carnival. A carnival is a great celebration when the whole town gives a big party, and decorates the streets, and invites all the people to dress up and march in parades and have a gay time generally.

Everybody was busy getting ready for it. Heart o' the Town was being strung with colored lights, the bands were practising, and those who weren't making costumes for themselves for the parade were helping others make theirs.

The parade was to start as soon as it was dark. It was to form in Heart o' the Town, near the hall, march through the park to Main Street, march around Main Street and

back into Heart o' the Town again to hear the decision of the judges. The judges would sit in a booth and, as the parade passed, would look at each costume, and each decorated carriage, motor-car, bicycle, or cart, and decide which were the best. The girl with the best costume would be chosen queen of the carnival, and the boy with the best the king. It was very exciting.

When Hamilton heard of it he thought with joy of his pumpkin. Hamilton's whole back yard was a big garden, for his father supplied the houses on Good Neighborhood Street with vegetables. There had been several pumpkins, but they were all sold now except one which his father had promised to Hamilton. It was the biggest one in the whole garden, bigger than any Hamilton had ever seen.

"It will make a dandy Jack o' lantern to carry," he thought as he hurried home with the news of the carnival.

Now Hamilton had two very special neighbors. His church-school teacher, Miss Helpful, lived on one side, and Mr. Richman, who had a great house and lawn and three motor-cars, lived on the other. So as soon as his mother said he could march in the parade, he ran straight across to tell Miss Helpful.

Miss Helpful said, "O Hamilton, I know a splendid

way for you to dress! Why don't you march as a great, tall Hallowe'en ghost, and carry that huge pumpkin your father gave you as a head? We could make a high frame to rest on your shoulders, and we'd put the Jack o' lantern face 'way up on the top of the frame. Then we'd cover you and the frame together with sheets, making holes for you to see through, and you'd look like a giant ghost."

Hamilton was so delighted he turned a somersault right on Miss Helpful's lawn. He could see in his mind just how funny he would look, with the biggest Jack o' lantern in town for a head, and stalking along as if he were on stilts. It was a wonderful idea. He went right back to tell his mother, who promised to find enough sheets to cover him, and his father, who set straight to work building a frame.

Then he ran over to tell Mr. Richman, who was sitting on his porch reading a paper. Mr. Richman looked thoughtful.

"Hamilton," he said suddenly, "I have another idea. How would you like to be a Hallowe'en ghost and drive in a ghost chariot?"

Very much excited, Hamilton went with Mr. Richman

out to the stable. A little Shetland pony lived in the stable, and a pony cart. Mr. Richman kept them for his small nieces and nephews who often came to visit him and sometimes he had let Hamilton exercise the pony.

"I was thinking," Mr. Richman said, "that we might cover the sides of the cart to look like a chariot and paint witches and things on it and then throw a sheet over the pony. You could stand in the chariot with your Jack o' lantern head and look as if you all came straight from ghostland. How would you like that?"

How would he like that? How would *you* like it? It seemed almost too good to be true. Every afternoon for a week Hamilton came straight home from school to work on the chariot. Hastings, who took care of Mr. Richman's cars, helped him, and when Mr. Richman came home he helped too. All the children on Good Neighborhood Street who heard about the wonderful pumpkin and chariot and who came to watch the work on it were sure Hamilton would be chosen carnival king.

Finally came the day before Hallowe'en. The chariot was covered with pictures of owls and black cats and witches; the frame which was to hold the Jack o' lantern in the air had been made to fit on Hamilton's shoulders;

and the sheets for his ghostly costume were in the sewing-room waiting to be wrapped around him. He made a last trip to the garden to see his precious pumpkin before he went to bed. Tomorrow he would cut off the top, scoop it out, and with a sharp knife cut eyes, nose and a grinning mouth. He could hardly wait for tomorrow to come. He did not quite dare to hope with the other children that he would be chosen king of the carnival, but he was pretty sure the judges would give him an "honorable mention" badge for all his work. How proud he would be and how good every one had been to help him! He gave his mother a big good-night kiss and hugged his father hard as he said good-night, and they knew he was saying, "Thank you for helping me," and hugged and kissed him back.

The sun was barely up next morning before Hamilton sprang out of bed and ran to the window which looked out upon the garden. Today was the day of the parade! In a few minutes he would bring his pumpkin in from the garden and begin to make the ghost's face. He looked down where it had been growing for so long. But suddenly his eyes grew big. He looked again. *His pumpkin wasn't there!*

For a minute he stared. Then the thought came to him

that his mother or father had been ahead of him and had already brought it in. He hurriedly put on his clothes and ran downstairs. But neither his mother nor father had come down yet. Well, perhaps they had brought in the pumpkin last night. He ran into the kitchen to look for it; no pumpkin there; on to the pantry; no pumpkin there; into the shed; still no pumpkin. Where could they have put it? He heard footsteps overhead, and ran to the stairs.

"Mother! father!" he called, "where's my pumpkin?"

His mother's voice was heard first speaking to his father, and then calling to Hamilton, "We haven't touched it, dear. Isn't it in the garden?"

Suddenly the bottom seemed to drop out of everything. His pumpkin was *gone!* The principal part of his costume was gone. His chance of being chosen king of the carnival was gone; even the fun of being in the parade. When his mother and father came downstairs they went all through the garden with him but the pumpkin was too big to be hidden under leaves or cornstalks. There was no doubt about it, the pumpkin had disappeared in the night, and a miserable little boy sat down to eat his breakfast.

"It's too bad I've sold all my pumpkins," said his

father, "but perhaps I can buy another down on Main Street."

"But it won't be a big one like mine," said Hamilton, trying to keep back the tears. "O mother! who could have taken it?"

His mother said, "Some one who didn't know how badly it would make you feel, you may be sure. Perhaps somebody saw that it had been left in the garden, and thought we didn't want it."

"But it was mine, mother, just the same. It wasn't theirs to take right out of the garden. It was taking what didn't belong to them."

Poor Hamilton! All the talking or feeling badly in the world would not bring back his pumpkin. He rushed over to tell Mr. Richman before he went to his office, and then Miss Helpful. Miss Helpful was sure Hamilton's father could find another pumpkin, though a smaller one. Mr. Richman said that Hamilton could still ride in his cart without a pumpkin.

"You can wear a mask over your face, and a sheet around you, and be a small ghost," he comforted him.

But that was not the same as the tall Jack o' lantern

high up in the air, driving a ghostly steed, and Hamilton grew more and more unhappy as the day wore on. He walked along the street, telling every child he met, "I've lost my pumpkin." It was a little comfort just to see how sorry they all were.

Then something happened. A message flashed through the street, "The Neighborhood Angel's here! Come to the Tower Room!"

Now you will remember that no one ever knew just when the Neighborhood Angel would come, but no matter when it was, the children thronged to the Tower Room to see what surprise he had for them this time.

Hamilton's heart leaped up when he heard the message. It would help to pass this long, sad day to go to the Tower Room. And he joined the others.

"Well," said the Angel when they were all together, "have you been having a good time, or have there been any Giants hanging around?"

"I guess," said Theodore, "there've been some Stealer Giants. Hamilton's lost his pumpkin."

"I know," said the Angel, putting his arm around Hamilton. "It was hard, wasn't it? Now what can we do about it?"

"We don't know," said the children. "We all wish he could find it."

"O Angel dear!" said Martha, "how could the Stealer Giants get into Anytown? *We* couldn't have let them in, could we?"

The Neighborhood Angel was certainly the most surprising creature! Instead of answering, what do you think he said? Not even you would have expected it.

"How would you like some moving pictures?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," cried the children gleefully, clapping their hands. Wasn't the Neighborhood Angel delightful!

Quickly he started his machine, and the children looked at the white wall ahead of them. Before another minute they were clapping and laughing harder than ever, for it was pictures of themselves that they were seeing. First came one of Good Neighborhood Street, with its shady trees and pretty lawns. Then there was the school at recess time, and one child after another cried, "Oh, look at Morton on the bars!" "Why, there's me!" "That's Jane swinging Ruth!" It was great fun. Then came a picture of the wall around Anytown, and in a flash one showing the other side of the wall with the funniest looking Giants trying to get in. You know those comical

pictures called animated cartoons, where the people and animals, instead of being photographed, are drawn with a pencil, and when they move they do it in jerks? Well, the Giants looked just like those pictures, and the queer little figures went round and round the wall trying to find an opening, and looked *so* disgusted when they couldn't find one!

"Goody!" said Henrietta, "you can't get in, you can't get in!"

Then there was a picture of Mr. Richman's lawn in the spring. He and Hastings were scattering grass seed all over it. Mr. Richman's house was on a corner, and it was easier sometimes to cut across it than to go around. Hamilton did it quite often himself. In fact the very next picture showed Hamilton and some of his friends first looking at the clock in Hamilton's house, then rushing out. The clock had showed that it was nearly time for school and they wanted to catch the car going down River Gate Street. You see the school was near Forest Gate. Out Hamilton's back door they went, came to a sign on Mr. Richman's lawn, which said, "Please keep off the grass," and without even stopping to read it, all ran across the new grass, trampling it down as they ran.

Then the picture showed the wall again, and one funny Giant fairly jumping up and down in delight, for he had found some little openings. In he hopped, beckoning to his friends to follow.

Now the picture changed. Mr. Richman was looking unhappily at his lawn and sadly shaking his head at the path the boys had made.

"Oh, dear," said Hamilton out loud, "I never thought!"

But a new picture was before them. The scene was in front of Marie's house. Marie was a little lame girl who lived with her mother in a house set back from the street. Marie's mother made dresses for the other children's mothers. The front gate swung to and fro, and as the children came along the street from school, one after another jumped on the gate for a "ride." Back and forth they swung. Then the picture showed the wall again. More little figures which would be Giants later on were trying to get through, and suddenly they saw their chance. The next picture showed the gate breaking with the weight of the children, and there it hung, looking very badly. The children ran on.

Then came a picture of Marie and her mother looking out of the window at the broken gate, and these words:

Oh, Dear! They've Broken our Gate! They Don't Know that we Have No One to Fix it.

The children in the Tower Room were very still. Marie's gate had hung like that for two weeks.

Next came a picture of Mrs. Friendly planting some flower seeds, and then one of Lawrence Hadley next door. Lawrence owned chickens, and very proudly sold eggs to his neighbors. This picture showed Lawrence opening the door of his henhouse, and the hens straggling out. All over Lawrence's lawn they walked, then into the neighboring garden. There they scratched and scratched, digging up the very seeds Mrs. Friendly had just planted. And again, outside the wall, delighted little Giants were seen discovering holes and jumping through them into Anytown.

The word LATER was flashed before them, and there was a picture of Mrs. Friendly calling upon Molly and Morton's mother. On the table was a great bunch of flowers and Mrs. Friendly was admiring them.

Then the screen made Mrs. Friendly say sadly, "I haven't a single flower this year. The hens next door ate all my seeds."

"I didn't think about that when I let my hens out," said Lawrence aloud. "Why, I let my *hens* let in the Stealer Giants!"

"We didn't think, either," said the other children, as one picture after another showed them carelessly hurting other people's property—making chalk marks on fences which had just been painted, taking flowers and fruit which grew near the street, but which certainly were not theirs, writing on the walls of the school, scratching initials on park benches and school desks—and more and more of the little figures outside gaining an entrance into Anytown.

Hamilton said, "Mr. Richman and Mrs. Friendly and Marie and her mother and the rest all looked as though they felt just like me when I lost my pumpkin."

Just then the Angel said, "My dears, I hear Sammy calling me. He's down on Busy Street with two other boys. Would you like to wait here till I go and help him? Perhaps he'll come back with me," and as the children all cried, "Yes, yes, only hurry, dear Angel," the Angel hastened away.

"Wonder why Sammy didn't come to the Tower Room?" the Boy with the Red Cap asked, for he had

made friends with Sammy lately and did not want him to miss any good things.

In a surprisingly short time the Angel returned, bringing with him not only Sammy, but two little boys with dirty faces, curly black hair and bright black eyes. In the arms of one was the biggest, yellowest—

"Hamilton's pumpkin!" cried all the children together, and Hamilton himself rushed up to them to make sure.

"I thought it was," said Sammy, all out of breath, but with eyes sparkling. "Say, those Stealer Giants had got 'way to Busy Street when I caught 'em!"

"Sammy, Sammy!" the children cried, "that's 'most to Heart o' the Town."

"I know it," Sammy went on. "These boys just moved into Anytown a little while ago. They didn't know about Heart o' the Town, nor the Giants, nor anything—just the parade. They wanted to be in it. I was on the way to my father's store when I saw them, and I caught up with them and said, 'Did Hamilton give you his pumpkin?' And when they looked frightened and started to run I just said, 'My, the Giants have gotten clear down here and we've got to drive them back quick!' And I told them

about Heart o' the Town and the Angel and the Giants and then I sent for the Angel, and we kind of felt as if we had spears and shields, and we had a fight right there. And then the Angel came and he said we shriveled 'em up, because when the boys said they'd bring back the pumpkin, the Angel looked all around with his glasses and couldn't find a one. Could you, Angel?"

"Not one," said the Angel. "Wasn't it fortunate that Sammy happened to be around?"

"Hurrah for Sammy!" the children shouted.

They were growing to like him better and better.

One of the little dark-eyed boys took a knife from his pocket and saying to Hamilton, "I mak-a da face," began cutting into the pumpkin.

The children watched him as he worked, and when he had finished and given the funny ghost head to Hamilton, Hamilton said, "Oh, that's lots nicer than I could have made! Thank you," and started out of the Tower Room with it.

"Where are you going?" asked the Angel.

"I'm going to Mr. Richman and say I'm sorry about his lawn," said Hamilton, "and tell him I'll never cut cross-lots again."

"Hamilton's Pumpkin!"

"And I'm going right home," announced Lawrence, "and get some of my egg money to buy some seeds for Mrs. Friendly and tell her she needn't be afraid of my old hens any more."

"Let's go and ask our fathers if they'll fix Marie's gate," suggested the children whose pictures had shown them swinging back and forth. "And let's tell the other children they mustn't do it any more, 'cause it isn't theirs."

"Let's wash off the marks we made on the Bradshaws' fence," came from a boy near the door, and before you could say "Jack Robinson!" the children had scattered in all directions.

"Dear me," said the Angel, "I seem to be left alone!" But he did not appear at all put out about it, in fact, he smiled to himself as he packed up his moving picture machine.

He did like to see children happy, and he couldn't help thinking how glad Hamilton and all his friends were going to be a little later when the carnival king was chosen.

V

THE LEMONADE BAZAAR

Next time, when things are not quite clear,
I'll hunt among the grasses:
It may be that I, too, can find
A pair of wonder glasses.

There had been several pin sales on Good Neighborhood Street, sales where the children sold dolls' furniture that they had made from cockle-burs and corks and spools for five pins, or ten pins, or twenty-five pins. The Wilcoxes had even had a cooky sale once, where everything bought had to be paid for with cookies. That had been the most popular of all, for the Wilcox children could not possibly eat all the cookies taken in without being sick, so the sale had turned into a sort of party, everybody helping to eat up the proceeds. Of course no one wanted the Wilcox children to be ill. But until Emery West and Louise Holman and Teddy Baker thought of it, nobody on Good Neighborhood Street had dared to have a real sale for real money.

Every year the older people of Anytown held a big bazaar, where they sold all sorts of things to make money for the city hospital. The bazaar was held in Heart o' the Town Hall, just before Christmas. Emery and Louise and Teddy heard their mothers talking about it weeks beforehand, and one day as they were leaving school an idea popped into Emery's head.

"Say," exclaimed Emery, "let's have a bazaar of our own!"

It was too big an idea to take in all at once.

"Where'd we get things to sell?" asked Teddy.

"Make them, or ask people for them, the way they do in the big bazaar."

"And not have cookies or pins?" asked Louise.

" 'Course not. What good would cookies or pins do in a hospital?" Emery demanded.

"A hospital! Ooooo! You mean sell things for real money and give it to the hospital?"

" 'Course," replied Emery. "That's what bazaars are for, isn't it?"

"Oh," cried Louise delightedly, "nobody's ever had a money sale on our street before! It'll be lots of fun."

"About how much do you think we'd make, Emery?" asked Teddy, in the tone of a business man.

"Oh, I couldn't say!" Emery returned in the same tone. "First thing to do is to 'point a committee. I'd better be on it, 'cause I thought of it."

"It would be a good thing for me to be on it," Teddy remarked; "then my father could help us."

"And men can't make things as well as women, so I'd better be on it, too," Louise added. "I can get ideas from my mother. She's on the committee for the real one."

"Well," Emery decided, "I'll be the head one, anyway, and you two can find out how to start it. We'll meet tomorrow to get everything settled."

The next morning the three met in front of the school.

"Well," Emery began, "my mother thinks it's a fine idea, and daddy says he'll build a kind of booth near our front gate. We can have the bazaar there."

That was a splendid beginning.

"I told my mother about it," Louise said, "but she's afraid we're too little to make anything good enough to buy. She says why don't we just sell lemonade?" She looked anxiously at the other two to see how they took it.

"Not bad," admitted Emery.

To tell the truth, the question of what they could sell at their bazaar was worrying Emery. He had started several things the night before, but had agreed with his mother that no one would care to buy them. Lemonade was a good idea.

Teddy proudly held out a shiny new quarter.

"My father says every business has to have capital to begin on," he explained, "and this is to start ours. We pay it back out of the money we make."

Why, the bazaar was already a success!

"Hurrah!" the other two partners shouted.

They decided that the sale should be on Friday afternoon, for Emery's house was so near the school it would be easy to catch the children on their way home.

The committee began to advertise. They collected all the calling cards of all three mothers, and Teddy's older sister and Louise's older brother helped them print on the plain side of the cards,—

LEMONADE BAZAAR
AT EMERY'S
FRIDAY 3-6
FOR THE HOSPITAL

When they were done they were distributed to all the children in the first, second and third grades.

The booth which Emery's father built was quite near the street. There was a counter on which the glasses would be put, and behind which Emery would stand and sell the lemonade which Louise made. Louise's mother had shown her how to squeeze the lemons and pour in water and stir in the sugar.

There was a little roof over the top which was held up by poles at the corners, and these poles were wound with red and white and blue crêpe paper. At the top of each was a flag, and on the roof were tacked two big signs. One said LEMONADE BAZAAR and the other HELP THE HOSPITAL.

The committee bought four lemons to begin with, and spent the rest of Teddy's quarter for sugar. It was agreed that as soon as the lemonade from those four lemons was sold, Teddy should run with some of the money which had been taken in to the General Store on Forest Gate Street, and buy more. Then Louise would make more lemonade.

"How much is it going to be?" asked the children, who were excited about anybody's having a sale for real money,

and had watched with great interest the building of the booth.

"Three cents a glass," announced Emery, "two for five."

All the children decided at once to ask their parents for five cents instead of three, it was so much cheaper that way.

As soon as school was over Friday afternoon the sale began. Teddy stood at the corner beating upon his drum and shouting, "Right this way to the Lemonade Bazaar! Help the hospital! Lemonade three cents a glass, two for five!"

All their friends looked enviously at him. It was such fun! Indeed they would have liked to be any member of the committee, for they noticed that the three partners drank a great many glasses of lemonade, and since it was their store, of course they did not have to pay for it. All who could had brought five cents so they could have two glasses, and in a surprisingly short time the pitcher was empty. Teddy was hastily sent for more lemons.

A man attracted by the drum and the sign came over to the booth.

"For the hospital, eh?" he said. "Well, that's fine," and he gave them five cents for one glass.

More children came, and several more grown people. They seemed very much pleased when they read the sign HELP THE HOSPITAL, and one of them said, "We'd better look out or the children's bazaar will make more money than ours!"

Then everybody laughed, for they all knew that the big bazaar in Heart o' the Town Hall always made hundreds and hundreds of dollars for the hospital.

Once more Teddy had to be sent for lemons, but by five o'clock children and grown people alike had stopped coming to the booth, so the committee divided what lemonade was left.

Then they said, "Let's count the money."

First of all they counted out twenty-five cents and laid it aside to pay back to Teddy's father. Then they started with the rest, for whatever was left over the twenty-five cents was clear gain for the hospital.

"One, two," they began counting, and got up to fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty. Then they counted the pennies—"Thirty-one, thirty-two, thirty-three, thirty-four, thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-seven."

As Soon as School was over . . . . the Sale Began

There were thirty-seven cents.

"Not bad," said Emery, in a voice he tried to make sound not a bit disappointed.

"Is *that* all?" exclaimed Teddy, showing very plainly that he was disappointed.

"It isn't such an awful lot," confessed Louise.

"It won't buy much for the hospital," admitted Emery.

"I heard my mother say the hospital needed hundreds and hundreds of dollars," said Teddy.

"Well, this will help a little," said Louise hopefully.

"H'm, guess not much," Emery answered. "We might buy them something, though, instead of giving them the money; then it wouldn't seem like so little."

"What could we buy?"

"Oh, toys, or something for the children's ward."

"You can't get many toys for thirty-seven cents," said Louise.

"That's so," the others nodded, and all three were silent a moment.

"Charlie Chaplin's going to be in the movies tomorrow," said Teddy. "Just saw the posters when I went to the store."

Quiet again.

"Ten cents for children," Emery observed.

Pause.

"We have thirty-seven cents," said Louise.

Another pause.

"There'd be seven cents left for peanuts," Emery said. "And we earned the money ourselves."

"And it wouldn't do the hospital any good anyway," added Teddy.

"But," Louise suddenly remembered, "some of those people bought lemonade because we said it was for the hospital, didn't they?"

"Oh, well," the boys told her, "they wouldn't care! Besides, it's too little to do the hospital any good."

"I wonder if it would be all right," Louise puzzled. She really wanted to go to the movies very much. "I'll ask mother," she decided, and jumped up. Just in front of the gate she stopped.

"It's our money, we can do what we like with it," Emery was saying, when Louise cried, "Oh, look, *look*, boys!"

She had stooped and picked up something. It seemed to be a pair of glasses. The boys hurried toward her.

"It looks like," she began excitedly, "oh, it is, it is!"

and then, as she held them to her eyes, "O Emery! O Teddy! the Angel must have dropped a pair of the wonder glasses. Oh, oh!"—she was dancing up and down now in her excitement—"I can see them. Somebody's let some more in—those Stealer Giants. Ooooo—maybe it was us! Oh, it was! I can see it all now. Boys, that money isn't *ours*. It doesn't belong to us. It was given to the hospital. Look yourselves!"

Emery seized the glasses, trembling in his excitement, and whistled. "She's right," he said. "O Angel, quick!" and he handed the glasses to Teddy, while he and Louise squeezed their eyes together and asked the Angel to help them.

Teddy gave one glance at the Giants and rushed for the money-box.

"You can't have it!" he shouted. "It's the hospital's! You just scoot!"

"Did I drop a pair of glasses?" asked a familiar voice near them.

The children turned.

"O Angel!" they cried, "you came just in time. And we found the glasses just in time to see things as they truly are."

" 'It is written,' " said the Angel, and Louise said, "Oh, you *do* take care of us, don't you?"

"Angel," begged Emery, "won't you please tell us how we can make this money do some good? It's only thirty-seven cents, but it belongs to the hospital."

"Thirty-seven cents!" repeated the Angel. "Why, that's a lot of money! Have you seen those patterns of birds and animals down at Wharton's?" (Wharton's was the big department store on Main Street.) "You can get some stiff paper and those patterns and make a whole circus parade and a skyful of birds for thirty-seven cents. Just the thing for sick children to play with."

"Oh, thank you, Angel! Thank you!" cried all three children at once, and then Louise asked anxiously, "Angel, will you look again, please, and see what's happened to those Giants?"

The Angel promptly put the glasses to his eyes.

"Shriveled up," he announced, with a nod, and smiled down at the children.

VI

THE CONSPIRACY

If I should start a Giant fight,
I'm almost sure that I could win it,
Especially with easy ones
Like Put-It-Off and Wait-a-Minute.

Clark had to stay after school to finish his number work. There had been plenty of time in school to do it, but he had become so interested in the stories in his reading book that he had put off the number work. On his way home he stopped to watch some boys playing ball.

When he finally reached his house he met his mother just starting out.

"O Clark!" she said, "where have you been? I waited and waited for you to do an errand at grandma's, and now it's so late there's only just time for you to do your practising before supper."

Clark went disappointedly into the house. He loved to visit his grandma, and he was old enough now to go by himself.

His little sisters must have seen their mother from the play-room window, for Clark heard them call, "Oh, wait a minute, mother, wait a minute!" Then they came tumbling pell-mell down the stairs, asking, "Where are you going, mother? Can't we go too?"

He heard his mother's voice saying, "I'm in a great hurry, children. Will it take long to get your coats?"

"No, just a minute, mother," they said, and rushed upstairs again.

From the piano stool Clark could see his mother waiting outside. The Good Neighborhood Street 'bus came along. She would have taken it if she had not been waiting for the girls. He saw her look at her watch again. It was several minutes before the children tumbled downstairs again, this time carrying coats in one arm, and dolls in the other.

"We had to find our dollies' coats," explained Alice breathlessly, as their mother came back to help them into theirs.

Clark began practising. He saw another 'bus come along, and his mother and the girls get in. Then he heard a whistle. That was Peter. Peter lived next door, and always whistled when he wanted Clark. Clark jumped up. Of

course he ought to go on practising, but this was probably something important.

"I'll just go out for a minute," he thought, "and see what he wants. Oh boy!" he exclaimed as he stepped outside, "where'd you get him?" For Peter had in his arms a brand-new puppy.

"It's a bull," said Peter proudly. "Isn't he a wonder?"

Clark agreed that he was. He thought of his practising again, but saying to himself, "Oh, well, I can put it off till after supper," he followed Peter over to the barn. Once there the two were so interested in watching the puppy try to walk on its wabbly little legs that it was after supper time before either one would have believed it, and when Clark ran home, he found the whole family waiting for him.

"Did you finish your practising?" his mother asked Clark as soon as supper was over.

"Well, no," answered Clark, looking a little ashamed. "I thought I'd put it off till after supper, because Peter has a new dog."

Mrs. Frayser hardly ever sighed. But she did now.

"You could have done my errand to grandma as well as play with Peter," she said. "Now I wanted you to try

on the shirts I'm making for you, and I'll have to 'put it off' because you must practise."

Clark went in to the piano. He was sorry. His mother spoke in such a disappointed voice that Mr. Frayser looked up, worried.

"You look tired, my dear," he said.

"Really," she answered, "I don't know why I should be tired. I haven't done a thing all day that I had planned to do. There seems to be a conspiracy against me to make me put everything off. 'Put-It-Off' and 'Wait-a-Minute,' ——they're regular lions in my path."

She lifted Bobby (short for Barbara) on her lap, and unbuttoned her shoes with one hand while she unfastened Alice's dress with the other.

"Oh, wait a minute, mother!" said Alice, as she felt her dress being unbuttoned. She did not want to go to bed yet. "I want to fix my dolly's hair."

The strangest sound was suddenly heard. It was a great big, tremendous roar. Alice had not even known she had said "Wait a minute" until the roar came.

"O daddy," she laughed, "you're such a funny lion!" But she did not say anything more about her doll's hair.

Mr. Frayser picked the little girls up like bundles, and carrying one under each arm, started up the stairs.

"Come on, Clark," he called, "let's do some more putting off. Your mother's too tired to listen to practising. Besides, I need your help."

Clark fairly bounded off the piano stool. He was so glad his father needed his help!

"What're you going to do, dad?" he asked when they were upstairs.

"Well," answered his father, "to tell the truth, I don't know. Did you hear your mother say there was a conspiracy against her? That 'Put-It-Off' and 'Wait-a-Minute' were regular lions in her path?"

"Put-It-Off" and "Wait-a-Minute"—why, those were the names of the twin Giants they had seen through the Angel's wonder glasses that day!

"Not lions, dad," Clark corrected; "they're Giants."

"Um," said his father. "Well, lions or giants, they're in your mother's way. She can't get anything done while they're around. She thinks there's a conspiracy. That's a scheme, you know, that people cook up to prevent certain things from happening."

"Probably it's the Giants," said Clark wisely.

"Know any way to get rid of them?" asked his father.

"The Angel helps us get rid of Giants," put in Alice.

"Well," said his father, "I wish you'd speak to him about these, then. They're an awful trial to your mother."

"Dad," said Clark after a while, "why couldn't *we* have a conspiracy, and get rid of 'em?"

Mr. Frayser looked at him. "A fine idea!" he said. "I knew you'd help me." And they put their heads together, all four of them, and they made a plot.

Mrs. Frayser was downstairs thinking of the things she wanted to do tomorrow. It would be Saturday, and she had hoped to finish those shirts for Clark before Sunday. But there were errands she would probably have to do herself, because it always took Clark so long, and he must make up his practising. Then there was that song Alice must learn for church school Sunday, and—

"Yes, children," she called, for they were all ready to be tucked in, and waiting for their good-night kiss.

"We have a thecret," whispered Bobby as she put her arms around her mother's neck. But not one of them told her what it was.

What is the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning? Do you jump right out of bed and into the bath-

tub the very minute you waken? Mr. Frayser didn't. He liked to lie a little while and think and stretch and yawn, and put off getting up as long as possible. Alice generally jumped out of bed at once, but Clark and Bobby were a little like their father.

The day of the conspiracy, however, was different. No "Put-it-offs" for them. Mrs. Frayser was still sleeping when her husband crept into the children's room and told them what day it was. Up they jumped, and began to dress. Clark was actually downstairs and had started his scales before his mother woke. She thought she was dreaming. Clark never practised before breakfast! And there was her husband nearly dressed! She got up and went into the little girls' room.

"Why, children!" she exclaimed, as she kissed them, "how could you manage to do so much without me?"

Alice answered proudly, "I helped Bobby just the way you do."

Mrs. Frayser hurried back to get into her own clothes, for she was far behind the rest. When she came downstairs Clark had practised a whole half-hour, breakfast was on the table, the coffee was bubbling in the percolator, and everybody was in the dining-room. She rubbed her eyes

She must still be dreaming—all there—all clean—all ahead of time!

"Did you tell Mary to have breakfast earlier?" she asked. "Why, I feel as if I'd been given a present of half an hour! It usually takes that long to get you all together."

The day was starting finely. As soon as breakfast was over, Clark took off his coat and shirt, while Alice and her father disappeared.

"Come on, mother," said Clark, "let's try on those shirts," and when they were tried on, his mother said, "I can finish these in no time now, and you can wear one tomorrow. I didn't realize they were so nearly done."

Clark was getting on his clothes again when a loud, shrill whistle caught his ear. Peter and the puppy, probably. He started toward the door. His mother heard him stamp his foot firmly on the floor and turn around.

What she did not hear was a Giant whispering to Clark, "You can put off practising till later. No need to do it all at once," and Clark answering scornfully, "O Put-It-Off, don't you come anywhere near me!"

Mrs. Frayser finished the shirts at the same time that Clark finished his practising, and just about the time Alice came downstairs with her father, both looking as

though they shared a delicious secret. Mr. Frayser kissed his wife good-bye and left for his office.

"Clark," said his mother, "you're just a dear boy to finish your practising without my saying a word. Mary needs some things from the store right away. Can I trust you to get them quickly?"

" 'Course," said Clark, putting the list in his pocket and reaching for his cap.

"Hi!" shouted Peter, as Clark passed, "come on over and see the bull."

Clark hesitated. It was still early in the morning. He would like to see that puppy. Giant Put-It-Off, who seemed to be very hard to squelch, came nearer.

"Put it off—the errand!" he whispered.

Clark felt in his pocket. He had something there to remind him—a little cardboard shield. Yes, there it was. And as he felt it, his hand touched the list his mother had given him, and he remembered what the conspiracy was for.

"Get away!" he told the Giant again, and out loud to Peter, "Later, maybe, busy now," and then, for fear Peter would call him again, he began to run. He never stopped until he came to the General Store.

With his arms full of groceries he started home again. Up on the school playground was a football team practising.

"Oh, *wait a minute!*" urged something, as he passed the school.

"I won't!" said Clark, and stamped his foot so hard that he dropped a package of soap.

"Good thing it wasn't the sugar," he thought as he picked it up. "Well, old Wait-a-Minute, I hope I stepped on you too! I won't even *hear* you if you speak again," and he walked quickly down Good Neighborhood Street, without stopping.

"Why, Clark! I wasn't expecting you for another fifteen minutes," said his mother, surprised. "I didn't know you *could* go to the store and get back as soon as this."

"Good!" said Clark. "Mother, if you don't need me any more, I'm going over to play with the pup."

"Nothing more, dear, until dinner. Remember, twelve o'clock! Come, Alice, we'll learn your song now."

Alice had been waiting for this. Her eyes danced as she watched her mother take the paper to the piano.

"We'll look at the words first, and then try it without looking," said her mother.

But Alice turned her back on the words and sang the whole song straight through without once looking on the paper.

"Why, you darling child!" cried her mother when it was ended, and caught Alice in her arms. "When did you learn it?"

"Daddy taught it to me this morning," Alice answered gleefully. "For a s'prise. Aren't you s'prised, mother?"

"Surprised!" exclaimed her mother. "Why, here's another present of a half-hour given to me. Darling, mother will have so much time she won't know what to do with it."

Out in the barn behind Peter's house Clark and Peter had been thinking hard for a long while. They had suggested at least twenty names for the puppy, but none had been good enough.

Clark happened to glance at the Big Ben clock on the tool shelf. It said ten minutes before twelve.

"I've got to go," he said, getting up from the floor and brushing himself.

"Aw, wait a minute, till we think of a name!" Peter teased.

Clark almost jumped. Wasn't it funny how often that old Giant popped up! Clark recognized him at once.

"You said the very words to make me go home all the quicker," he shouted, and he took to his heels, leaving Peter a very much surprised boy.

Up in the play-room Alice and Bobby were furnishing their doll-house. The curtains were up in all but two windows when they heard their mother's voice saying, "Come, little girls, it's time to wash and get ready for dinner."

"Let's wait," began Alice, and then seizing Bobby's hand, she turned and faced the Giant that she couldn't see, but which she knew was there.

"No, we can't wait, so there!" and saying to Bobby, "That's the way to get rid of 'em," Alice led her into the bathroom to wash their hands.

Downstairs everybody was ready for dinner, even their father, who came home at noon on Saturdays. Mrs. Frayser didn't have to wait a single minute for a single person.

"I don't know what's happened," she said happily, as soon as the blessing had been asked. "Yesterday I said everything seemed to conspire against me to keep me from getting things done, and today there seems to be a conspiracy to make me get them done!"

Bobby turned to her father. "She guethed our thecret!" she whispered.

Mrs. Frayser looked from one to the other of the conspirators, and said suspiciously, "Ah, I thought something was up!"

"Have you much to do this afternoon?" Mr. Frayser asked her.

"Why, no," she answered. "I've done this morning what I thought it would take two days to do. I keep feeling as if I'd been given a present of lots of extra time."

"Then," said he, "let's celebrate. Let's take our supper, and pile into the car and drive off toward the mountains and do nothing all the rest of the day but look at autumn leaves and have a good time."

And Bobby and Alice and Clark and their mother agreed in an enthusiastic chorus, "Let's!"

VII

PRETEND-STORIES

I'd like to play the Angel's game,—
I think I'd know which tales of mine
Would make his shield grow dull and dark,
And which would make it glow and shine.

Nobody could find Jimmy. And the Angel wanted particularly to see him. He had a new game for the children to play in the Tower Room, and he knew Jimmy would like to learn it. Word had gone round a whole hour ago that the Neighborhood Angel had come, and the children on Good Neighborhood Street, as fast as they heard the good news, rushed to the Tower Room, to see what surprise he had for them this time.

But when they were all there the Angel asked, "Where's Jimmy?" and sure enough, he was missing.

"That's funny," Johnny said. "I told him as I came along past his house to come to the Tower Room."

"And I saw him out in his front yard," said Louise, whose house was near Jimmy's.

"Maybe he didn't hear," said Hamilton. "I'll go back and get him."

But Hamilton was not able to find him. Morton and Sammy and Teddy all volunteered to go and hunt up Jimmy, and they scoured Good Neighborhood Street, asking everybody they met if they had seen him. Some had, but could not tell where he had gone.

"I know he heard me when I told him the Angel was here," insisted Johnny, "because he looked so funny. And when he didn't come along, I told him again and said to hurry up."

It was very mysterious.

"Do you suppose he didn't want to come?" asked the Angel anxiously.

"Oh, no!" the children cried. "We always want to come" —and then one or two of them looked thoughtful.

The Boy with the Red Cap remembered once when he had not cared about seeing the Angel, and Mabel Lockwood thought of that day when the teacher had asked who scattered the papers on the school lawn, and she had not raised her hand. You see, she had scattered them. "I'm not telling a lie," she had thought, "for I'm not saying anything," but when the Neighborhood Angel had

come afterward, Mabel somehow had not felt like seeing him.

"Well," said the Angel, opening the door of the secret closet, "let's get out our shields and play, anyway," so he handed the shields to the children one by one.

It was always exciting to see their shields after a long time, and discover which ones had grown brighter, and to see if perhaps somebody had not won a star.

The Angel looked sorrowfully at Jimmy's shield a moment before he stood it up against the wall. It was quite dull, the others noticed.

Then he started a game which was the most fun, especially if you liked to make believe and could tell wonderful stories like Annie Swinnerton. But every little while the Angel would look toward the door as if he rather expected somebody to come. The children knew he was hoping for Jimmy. Jimmy liked to make up stories, too.

But Jimmy by this time was as far from the Tower Room as he could be. When he saw the children going toward Forest Gate he walked straight in the opposite direction. He did not want to see the Angel, nor the children in the Tower Room, nor his shield, nor even his mother. When he came to Mr. Richman's he turned the

corner down River Gate Street. Mr. Richman's lawn and garden stretched all the way to Next-to-the-Nicest Street. There was a hedge at the end of the garden, and just inside the hedge were grape-vines. Jimmy gave one look at the grape-vines, and walked rapidly down River Gate Street.

He wondered what the children were doing in the Tower Room. Probably something that was fun. The Angel always had something new for them. But thinking of the Angel sent an achey feeling through him, so he tried to whistle and think about something else. It did not seem as if he wanted to see the Angel ever again. Wasn't it queer, when usually he would run to greet him?

He walked on toward Heart o' the Town. But Heart o' the Town made him think of the Giants who wanted to live there, and he did not like to think of Giants. There were some good swings in Heart o' the Town, but—oh, dear, nothing seemed any fun any more!

Where could he go? There was not a child to play with on Good Neighborhood Street. Every single one had gone to the Tower Room, every one, except little Marie, who was lame. Without thinking he started up Oak Street, and when he reached Next-to-the-Nicest Street where

Oak Street ended, he went through Marie's back yard to her house. He really had not intended to go there, but now he was near he might as well.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came, Jimmy!" Marie said, when he walked in. "See what Uncle Will just sent me! I wanted some one to show it to, and there's not a single child on the street. Where do you suppose they've all gone?"

Jimmy did not tell her they were at the Tower Room, for fear she would ask why he was not there too. He looked at the box Marie had opened. It held a whole toy village.

"Let's make Anytown," Jimmy suggested, so while Marie held a flat board on her lap, Jimmy put up the little houses.

They began with Heart o' the Town, of course, and ended with Good Neighborhood Street, with a wall around it of blocks.

"Now let's play Giants," said Marie, for she knew all about the Tower Room and Giants and shields. The Neighborhood Angel was her friend, too, and there was a shield in the Tower Room for her, which, the children told her, was growing brighter all the time.

"You tell a pretend-story, Jimmy, about how some-

body lets in some, and how they 'most get to Heart o' the Town, and how you and I drive them out. Here's a boy to be you,"—she showed him little figures which came with the village,—"and a girl for me, and here are some other people."

"What'll we have for the Giants?" Jimmy asked. He was not sure he was going to like this game.

Marie looked around the room. On the table was a plate of Delaware grapes. She answered promptly.

"We'll use grapes. We can roll them around, and then we can eat them to get rid of them. We can leave the skins, 'cause they look so shriveled up."

It was a good idea, wasn't it?

"Well," began Jimmy, and then he caught his breath. There was only one story he could think of, and that was about grapes, and he did not feel a bit like telling it. But he seemed to have to.

"Well," he began again, "once there was a man and he had grapes in his garden."

"Mr. Richman has grapes," Marie put in. "He sent mother these. We'll play it was Mr. Richman," and she placed a little figure next to the house that stood for Mr. Richman's.

"And there were some boys and they thought it would be fun to get into his garden and take some."

"That's where the Giants come in," said Marie, putting some of the grapes outside the pretend-wall. "Soon as they think it's fun, that makes a hole in the wall." She made a hole in the wall.

Jimmy continued, "And they sneaked around and found a place in the hedge."

Marie moved some little figures up from different parts of the town.

"They couldn't live on Good Neighborhood Street," she explained, " 'cause since the Angel showed the Stealer Giants in the movies, none of us *would*."

Jimmy took a long breath but went on, while Marie moved the Giants through the holes in the wall, and on to Good Neighborhood Street.

"And they picked a lot, and then they heard somebody coming, so they slid through the hedge again and ran home."

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Marie, sending the boys back to their homes, and bringing the Giants farther into town. "Now you and I have to get them out."

"Well, that isn't all," Jimmy said, shaking his

head, and took more grapes off their stems for Marie. "One of 'em went home and his father said at supper that Mr. Richman didn't know what to do 'bout the boys taking his grapes, and this boy was afraid he'd be caught, and he told his mother he was walking past the garden, and he saw a great big dog come and eat all the grapes."

"O Jimmy!" cried Marie, horrified. "That lets in more still—the Truth Hater Giants! We've got to work like everything to drive them out. You go after those, and I'll go after these," and she rolled some of the Giants farther into the town, and let in several more.

"Hurry, or they'll get to Heart o' the Town!" she said, sending one figure after some of them, and handing Jimmy another to chase the rest.

It was very exciting and hard work, but they finally succeeded in getting rid of them all, driving back some, and eating up others, leaving only the shriveled-up skins.

"That was fun," Marie said, when they were all driven out. "Tell another pretend-story, Jimmy."

"That wasn't a pretend-story," said Jimmy.

Marie looked at him, startled. "Not pretend? But Jimmy, it isn't *true?*"

Jimmy did not say anything, for he looked as if he were going to cry. He just nodded his head.

"O *Jimmy!*" Marie exclaimed again. "Then they really are inside! And we really have to get rid of them. But *you* didn't take Mr. Richman's grapes and tell your mother what wasn't true, did you?"

Jimmy bit his lip and nodded again.

"I thought it was a pretend-story. Did you tell it to your mother for a pretend-story, Jimmy, or a true one?"

"True," said Jimmy, winking back the tears.

"But you told her afterward it wasn't true, didn't you?"

Jimmy shook his head.

"But, Jimmy," cried the little girl, with red spots of excitement in her cheeks, "you've let in a great lot! You've just *got* to do something to get rid of them."

Suddenly a light came into Jimmy's eyes, and he stood up.

"I will!" he almost shouted, doubling up his fist. "I'll go and tell mother right now, and Mr. Richman, and the Angel."

"The Angel knows," Marie reminded him. "Oh, I wish I could help you, Jimmy! I can. Jimmy, I'll lie right here and keep asking for the Angel to help you while you

try to drive them out." And she began the minute Jimmy closed the door after him.

Poor Jimmy! It wasn't very easy. It never is easy, is it, to say you've done wrong? But his mother was hoping he would come, for she knew before he told her. Mothers and Angels always know. That's one reason they're so much alike.

They both agreed that he must tell Mr. Richman too. Jimmy was so afraid his courage would give out that he ran all the way to the big house on the corner. If he only could have known it, Giants just dropped flat as he ran, and by the time he had told Mr. Richman the whole story, you could not have seen one with a microscope.

When he had finished he felt much better. It was queer, but the whole world looked different. He suddenly wanted to see the Angel. He wondered if he would be in the Tower Room still.

Mr. Richman was just going out. As he stepped into his car, he said, "How about a ride with me, Jimmy? I'll let you out wherever you say."

Now wasn't that nice of Mr. Richman? Of course Jimmy thought of the Tower Room and how quickly he could get there in the car, so he looked gratefully into Mr.

Richman's face and said, "Thank you, sir," and jumped in beside him.

Over in the Tower Room the children had been playing the most interesting game with a special shield which grew bright or dull while the Angel pretended to be different children and told different stories. When he told a true story, and said it was true, the shield shone. When he told a make-believe one, just to entertain them, it was still bright. But when he told a make-believe story and tried to make them think it was true, it grew dark. When he pretended he was a child and told a make-believe story to save himself from punishment, it grew still darker. Then the children took turns doing it. They liked to think they could tell when the story would make the shield shine.

You remember that the Angel had stood Jimmy's shield up against the wall when he took it out of the closet? Suddenly as the children were playing, one of them cried, "Look at Jimmy's shield!" Even as they looked the dullness all went away, and it grew brighter and brighter before their very eyes. You could almost see your face in it. The children had hardly got through wondering at it when in through the door burst Jimmy himself.

"Look at your shield, Jimmy!" the children all cried, but Jimmy ran straight into the Angel's outstretched arms. For there wasn't anything or anybody that he wanted to see just then as much as his Angel.

VIII

THE TRAVELING CIRCUS

They say there's a way
To make every day
Seem sunny and fine the year through,
So you even forget
That skies can be wet.
Now I wonder if that could be true?

It was raining hard, and it was Saturday. All along Good Neighborhood Street you could have heard the same wail,—"Oh, de-*ar!* why did it have to go and rain on Saturday?"

In the Swinnerton house it was a mighty wail, for the Swinnerton house had eight children. You could say their names in rhyme, like this: "Harley, Ready, Annie, May, Charlie, Bonnie, Fannie, Fay." Fay was the baby. That was not really her name, but Fay means fairy, and she looked so much like one that everybody voted to call her that so she would rhyme.

Harley was the oldest. She was fourteen, and her father

called her "Boss," because she could manage the rest so well.

Then there was Ready, who had red hair, and was covered out to the tip of his nose with freckles. The boys called him Reddy because of his hair, but his mother spelled it Ready, because if she ever wanted an errand done, somehow or other it was always he who was ready to do it.

Annie came next. Annie could tell the most marvellous stories you ever listened to, and she always had plenty of listeners, you may be sure.

May was as pretty as a sunny day in spring. She and Annie together could hold the children spellbound, for while Annie told the stories, May would draw pictures to illustrate them.

Charlie—I wish you could have seen Charlie! Only nobody ever called him that. They called him Tubby, because he looked just like a tub. He was one of the jolliest of them all. Everybody laughed no matter what he said or did. It was partly because he was so fat, and partly because he was so funny anyway.

Bonnie and Fannie were the twins, whom nobody could tell apart except the family. They could, because of course

they had always known the difference. That was all except little Fay, who was too small to care what the weather was.

Seven very long faces appeared at the breakfast table on this day. Even Tubby hadn't a joke to make. The minute breakfast was over Harley went to her room and began to put her bureau drawers in order. She always kept that for rainy days. Bonnie and Fannie teased Annie for a story, but Annie said she would rather read a story herself, and took her book up to the attic. May went into the parlor and drummed on the piano with one finger. Ready and Tubby, who happened each to want the drum at the same time, argued very noisily, and sounded as if they would be quarreling in a minute. Bonnie began to ride round and round the living-room on her velocipede and Fannie on her kiddie-kar, until they suddenly bumped into each other, and even the baby joined in the crying.

Not a very happy family, was it? Mrs. Swinnerton was in the kitchen, and when Harley heard the little girls crying, and the baby howling, and Tubby and Ready almost quarreling, she rushed downstairs.

"For goodness' sake, come on up to the attic. We'll

find *something* to do," she said, taking up the baby, and as the children were used to doing what Harley told them to they stopped crying and almost quarreling, and clumped upstairs. Annie, who had thought she would not be disturbed at her reading, was a little cross when she saw the whole troop thronging in. The attic was fitted up as a great play-room, and most of the toys were kept up there.

Along the walls were pinned pictures the children had cut from magazines, and on one wall was a whole row of little white cardboard shields. They faced Harley as she stood on the top stair.

"I guess the Neighborhood Angel wouldn't be very proud of this family," she observed, as she looked from one gloomy face to another.

"Wish it would stop raining and he'd tell us to come to the Tower Room," Tubby said.

"H'm," Ready returned, "shouldn't think you would. You don't suppose your shield would be bright, do you?"

This sounded like quarreling again. Harley looked at the cardboard shields. " 'It is written.' " she read.

The children were quiet a moment.

"Well," remarked Annie, who had to put away her

book, "if he comes around whenever we want him, I wish he'd come right now and tell us something to do."

Harley had an idea. "Let's ask for him to spend the day with us today."

The rest gasped. "The whole day? With just us?"

Harley nodded. "He promised," she reminded them, "that he'd always come if we needed him. 'It is written,' you know."

"Oh, let's!" the others all chimed in, and then they closed their eyes tight and thought of the One who sends his Angels about to keep his children, and asked if their own dear Neighborhood Angel could not please come and spend the day with them because they needed him. And when they opened their eyes again, lo and behold, they were all smiling!

Annie said, "I was horrid to go off by myself with a book. Want me to tell you a story now?" And Ready said to Tubby, "I don't want to be a pig. Here, take your old drum!" And Tubby said, "I didn't want it anyway."

Suddenly the whole room was bright and cheery. It is wonderful what just thinking about Angels does for us.

"I feel as if I'd been invited to a party," said a familiar

voice, and there was the Angel, tossing the baby into the air and making her squeal with delight.

Then he rolled Fannie and Bonnie over in a mixed-up pile, pretending he was trying to sort them out; and he dropped a flower in May's lap, and put his fingers on Annie's lips so that she wanted to start right in telling the most interesting story; and he showed Tubby a picture of a funny circus clown and said, "You remind me of him, Tubby"; and then he took out his wonder glasses and looked right into Harley's and Ready's brains. Everybody was waiting to see what he would do or say next. The Angel was so unexpected!

He nodded approvingly at what he saw, and then he said to them all, "How about an adventure? Feel like one?"

That was exactly what they did feel like. Wasn't it wonderful how the Angel *always* knew!

"Well," the Angel went on, "I'm glad I was invited early, for we have a good long day. You know years ago a few people who could entertain others would travel from place to place, and give shows. It just occurred to me that you children would make a good traveling circus. I know Annie can tell stories, and May can draw and Tubby

can make people laugh. Every one of you has some gift, and the whole fun of having a gift or a talent is in being able to use it for other people. Harley is a fine manager. She could run the whole program, for she knows what you can all do best. You can dress in funny clothes and call yourselves the Swinnerton Traveling Circus, and entertain all the shut-ins on Good Neighborhood Street."

Well, the children took to the scheme like ducks to water! Part of them rushed to the dress-up trunk to see what they could find. Harley ran downstairs to ask her mother, who thought it the finest kind of way to spend a rainy day. She made a list of people she thought would like to see them, and Harley called them all up on the telephone.

"Would you like a visit from the Swinnerton Traveling Circus?" she would ask, and the people at the other end would always say, "We'd love it, thank you. Come as soon as you can."

Up in the attic the Angel was pulling things out of the trunk and trying them on the children.

"I can play two pieces on the harmonica," volunteered Ready, "and I have a box of tricks I can do. And, say,

doesn't a circus have to have a Ring Master? I'd like to be that."

"We could do our dance," said Bonnie to Fannie, and Harley said, as she joined them, "And I can play the piano for you."

"I'll tell 'The Three Bears' for one story," promised Annie, "because May can draw such good pictures for that. And then I can make one up."

They were so glad for all the gifts they had. Each one would help to make the circus better.

Harley was a fine manager. She took a pencil and paper and wrote down the different things they could do. Ready would announce them. He called them "numbers."

First there would be a parade. There would be combs, a drum, and Ready's harmonica, and they would all play the two pieces Ready knew, "Go Tell Aunt Rhoda," and "The Mulberry Bush."

The Angel helped them make some animal costumes for the twins out of brown flannel. You could not be sure what kind of animals they were, but it didn't matter. The twins could just be trained animals, and dance, and turn somersaults, and do gymnastics, and pick out letters as the Ring Master directed.

Ready had once had a clown suit which fitted Tubby now, so Tubby, as clown, would imitate the trained animals, doing everything they did, but in a funny way. This was Harley's program:

1. Parade by Everybody. 2. Somersaults by the Trained Animals and Clown. 3. Stories by Annie, Pictures by May. 4. Animals dance and pick out letters, also Clown. 5. Tricks by Ready. 6. Singing America by all.

When every one was dressed and had on rubbers and waterproof coats and HATS, they said good-bye to their mother, and crossed the street to the Beldings. Old Mr. and Mrs. Belding loved to see the children, but hardly ever went out. Mrs. Belding opened the door wide when she heard them coming, and told them she was so glad it rained, if it brought a circus to town. They went through the whole program, and old Mr. Belding laughed so hard at Tubby that it made Tubby all the funnier, and even the twins—I mean the trained animals—laughed, too. Mrs. Belding thought Annie was a beautiful story-teller, and wanted May to leave her pretty pictures. And when they left, they felt that the circus had been a great success, for old Mr. Belding said that they made him laugh until he felt young again.

The Circus Parade at the Beldings

"Wasn't it fun?" they said to each other, and hurried on to Raymond's house. Raymond had fallen from a tree and broken his leg, and his mother said that he had been looking forward to the circus ever since Harley's telephone. He thought Ready's tricks were wonderful, so before they left Ready showed him how to do two of them. Raymond said he had never seen such a nice circus.

Next they went to the hospital. Out on the sun porch were some children who looked very lonely and tired when the circus arrived, but who began to laugh as soon as they saw Tubby. They loved Annie's stories, and May's pictures, and Ready's tricks, and the little trained animals, and especially the funny clown, and begged them all to come again soon. As they went out, the head nurse said the circus had done them all good.

Little lame Marie's was the next house, and here they were greeted with a good audience. For as soon as Harley's message had come, Marie's mother had telephoned some other children to come in and see the circus. Tubby was funnier than ever, and kept thinking of new antics, until the children and Marie's mother were in gales of laughter.

And when it was all over, Marie's mother brought cups of chocolate and bread and butter for them all, so it was a

real party. The Traveling Circus was having a beautiful time.

Everywhere they went people thanked them for brightening a dull day and invited them to come again.

The news of the circus had traveled along the street faster than the circus itself, and as it passed people would wave to the actors from their windows, and say to each other, "Isn't this a beautiful neighborhood? I think it has the nicest children. I'm so thankful to be living in it!"

It was a tired but happy little company that took a 'bus home from Marie's. As soon as they had told their mother what fun it had been, they trudged up to the attic to take off their costumes.

"Did you have a good time?" asked the Angel, who was there before them.

"O Angel, we had a *lovely* time!" they chorused, and Harley added, "I never spent such a nice rainy day in my life."

"Me either," asserted Tubby, "and it started being no fun at all."

"It's all on account of the Angel," said Annie, but the Angel said, "I did very little. I have some news for you, children. I just dropped around to the Tower Room and

happened to glance at the shields. My dears, yours look as if some one had just shined them with silver polish!"

"Oh!" cried every one of them joyfully.

"And just one thing more, then I must go. When I came in this morning the street in front of your house was so crowded with Selfish Giants I could hardly get through.

"Oh!" cried the children, horrified.

"But, my dears, there's not a sign of even a thin one left."

"Oh!" cried the children, much relieved.

"Thank you for inviting me to spend the day, children. I've had a perfectly beautiful time," and before they could thank him for coming, he was gone.

IX

HOW JOHNNY WON HIS STAR

The Giants aren't so strong when they come sneaking
through the wall,
It isn't hard to shrivel them to nothing when they're small,
But if you let them stay, before you know what they're about,
They've grown so big, it's all a child can do to drive them out.

In a pretty little brown cottage, set back from the street, lived Marie and her mother. Because Marie had a lame back she could not run about and play like other children, but each morning her mother would lift her to the couch by the window, and from there she could watch the children of Good Neighborhood Street and wave to them as they passed. Often they came in to play with her, and tell her all about what they had been doing.

In the summer the little lawn in front of the cottage was bright with flowers, but it was the beginning of winter now, and the flowers were gone. Marie was glad of that, for the men who had been putting their new furnace in the cellar would have trampled them all down and killed the plants with the litter they made. It was really cold today.

"Isn't it fine," said Marie's mother, "that our furnace was put in before this cold weather? I wish, though, that Mr. Brown had told me what to do to make it burn brighter. It isn't quite warm enough yet."

Mr. Brown was the man who took care of the furnaces in that part of the town. He lived on Middle Street, but early each morning he came to Good Neighborhood Street, shook the ashes from the furnaces, and shoveled in enough coal to last until he came again at night.

"I think," said Marie's mother, "that I will go down in the cellar and open up some dampers. This new furnace isn't like the old one, but I'm sure I can find the right thing to do."

Sure enough, in a few minutes the radiators began to *sssss-zzzzz*, and by afternoon the house was so warm that Marie's mother went down cellar again. Above the door of the furnace was a little glass tube. Mr. Brown had told her yesterday what it was for.

"It shows how much water is in the boiler," Mr. Brown had said. "You see it is half full now. That's about right. If it should ever be empty, send for me, for I must draw more water into the boiler. It would be dangerous to try to do it yourself, for if the boiler should really be empty,

it would explode. I can tell whether there's still some water there or not."

She looked now at the little tube. She looked again. She could hardly believe her eyes. In the morning it had been over half full. Now it was nearly empty. She must get hold of Mr. Brown.

She rushed upstairs and looked out of the window. Not a single person was in sight. She could not leave her little sick daughter long enough to go to Middle Street, and Mr. Brown had no telephone. She looked at the clock. In a little while school would be out. Perhaps one of Marie's little friends would do the errand for her. She did not tell Marie what was making her so anxious, but she kept wishing that school would close. She picked up her sewing and tried to do a little work. In a few minutes she laid it down and went again to the cellar. The tube was empty!

What was it that Mr. Brown had said about the boiler bursting? Suppose it should burst, and flood the cellar, and put out the fire, or maybe make an explosion! It was too terrible to think of, with little Marie in the house. She flew upstairs and looked out of the window again.

Johnny was the first second-grade child out of school

that day. He had jammed on his hat and started on a run for Mr. Friendly's house. Mr. Friendly lived two doors beyond Marie. Johnny was in a great hurry, for it was a special day in school. The teachers had given to each child sheets of gaily colored stamps, and had explained that by selling these stamps for a penny apiece they would be helping sick people to get well. The more stamps the children sold, the more people they would help. A banner was to be given to the grade which sold the most, and besides that, the children who brought back the most money for the stamps would receive prizes for themselves.

There were three kinds of prizes, and Johnny felt sure he could win them all, for he had friends who he knew would buy . There was Mr. Friendly, and Miss Helpful, his teacher in the church school, and Mr. Richman, a friend of his father's. Oh, he could sell ever so many, and win the biggest prize of all for helping the greatest number of sick people! And as he was the first one out of school, he would see these people before the other children had a chance. He hurried faster down the street.

He was passing Marie's house just as Marie's mother came up from the cellar to look out of the window. How glad she was when she saw him!

She rushed to the door and called, "O Johnny, Johnny! Won't you please come here a minute?"

Johnny hesitated. He wanted awfully to see Mr. Friendly at once. Just at that moment a Selfish Giant, who was always watching for openings in the wall of Anytown, found a little hole and slipped through.

"Pretend you don't hear her," he whispered in Johnny's ear.

But Johnny shook his head and hurried up the walk to Marie's mother, while the Giant slunk away a little.

"Johnny," said Marie's mother in distress, "would you do an errand for me?"

"I'm pretty busy just now," he answered. "Could I do it for you later?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, but I must get word to Mr. Brown at once! The furnace boiler is empty, and unless he comes and lets in water, I don't know what will happen. I dare not do it myself, for fear of an explosion."

Poor Johnny! He knew that Mr. Brown lived on Middle Street, for he took care of Johnny's furnace, too. The Selfish Giant thought he saw another opening, and came nearer.

"You can't do it," he whispered.

"I *can* do it!" Johnny announced in a loud tone, with a gesture which looked as though he were pushing something away.

The Selfish Giant disappeared entirely.

"Oh, thank you!" said Marie's mother. "You won't stop until you find him, will you? It would be too terrible if anything should happen!"

"I won't," promised Johnny, and went down the walk.

At the gate he paused. Mr. Friendly's house was next but one.

That very second into the city of Anytown slipped the Giant Break-Your-Promise, and before Johnny realized what was happening, something made him think: "It wouldn't take long just to stop at Mr. Friendly's door. The other children mustn't get there first!"

He was almost at Mr. Friendly's door now.

"But I promised," he said to himself.

"Break your promise," whispered the Giant.

"I will not!" Johnny almost shouted, and thrust his stamps into his pocket, and started on a run toward River Gate Street.

Marie's mother stood in the doorway, anxiously watching him. When she saw him run she breathed a sigh of

relief, and went back to her work. She had already taken it up when two little girls came up the walk.

"Would you like to buy any Red Cross stamps?" they asked, holding them out for Marie and her mother to see. "The second grade is trying to win the banner for selling the most."

"Do you get anything yourselves?" Marie's mother asked, reaching for her purse.

"Oh, yes!" answered Jane, one of the two. "If we sell fifty, we get a funny little letter every month all the year, and if we sell a hundred we get a funny little letter every month all the year and a ruler. And if we sell two hundred we get a funny little letter every month all the year and a ruler and a pin. We're trying for a pin. We came straight from school, and if we get to people's houses ahead of the other children, we can sell them first. Johnny was the first one out in our grade, and we were next."

Marie's mother looked up quickly.

"Did Johnny have stamps to sell?" she asked.

"Oh, yes!" said Emelie, the second child. "He told me he was sure he'd get the big prize, for he knew so many people who would buy from him if he only saw them first."

"Poor Johnny!" said Marie's mother. "I sent him on an

important errand. I wonder if I should have trusted him."

"Maybe he'll sell stamps first and then do your errand," suggested Jane hopefully.

"He promised he wouldn't stop on the way. Oh, supposing he forgets his promise!"

She went to the door and looked out. Johnny was out of sight. There was nothing for her to do but wait.

"I can buy only a few stamps, children," she said as she came back, "and if you don't mind, I'll get them of Johnny. He was really here first, you know."

As Jane and Emelie left to go to Mr. Friendly's house, two more children joined them; others came running down the street; it seemed as though Good Neighborhood Street were full of children ringing door-bells.

"I wonder where Johnny is," Marie's mother thought as she closed the door.

Johnny was just then approaching the home of his church-school teacher.

"Just stop at the door. It'll only take a minute. She's sure to buy some," urged Giant Break-Your-Promise, who was growing bigger and coming closer.

"Go away!" said Johnny.

"But you've missed your chance at Mr. Friendly's, and think of those prizes!"

Johnny stopped. "I *am* thinking of them!" he said, blinking hard. "I told you to go away!" he commanded, and ran straight past his teacher's. The Giant grew smaller, but kept on running with him.

He was almost at Mr. Richman's now.

"You know," said the Giant, suddenly looming large, "if you stopped at Mr. Richman's he might buy the whole two hundred, and then you wouldn't have to bother any more."

"That's so," thought Johnny. "And if I lose my chance here, some third-grade boy'll take it. We've just got to win the banner for our grade," and he started up the steps. And at that moment a whole dozen of the Truth Hater Giants came through an opening they saw in the wall.

Suddenly Johnny thought of Marie's mother standing in the doorway telling him that the boiler might burst.

"I can't stop!" he cried, running down the steps again, and the new Giants, who had joined the first, dropped back.

Down River Gate Street he ran to Middle Street. He was almost there. Perhaps if he hurried back, he could still

find a few places where stamps had not been bought, although he could see that Middle Street was full of children going from door to door with the gay little sheets, and he knew that Good Neighborhood Street would be just as full.

At last he reached Mr. Brown's. He rang the bell. Mrs. Brown came to the door.

"We've bought our stamps," she said, and closed it again before he could catch his breath from running.

"Oh, please!" he called.

Perhaps Marie's house was exploding already! And then, as he could not make Mrs. Brown come to the door again, no matter how hard he rang the bell, he tried the latch. The door opened.

"Please, Mrs. Brown," he called, "I didn't come to sell stamps. Marie's mother sent me for Mr. Brown. Her boiler's empty and she's afraid it's going to explode."

"Oh, I'm sorry!" said Mrs. Brown, "but Mr. Brown isn't here."

"Isn't here!" Johnny repeated blankly. "Where is he?"

"At Heart o' the Town Hall," answered Mrs. Brown.

"They sent for him to fix something that was wrong with the furnace there."

"Thank you," said Johnny weakly, and went straight out of the door. He felt as though he might cry, if he stayed inside. All his precious time gone for nothing!

"Well," said one Giant in his ear, as he stood on the steps blowing his nose very hard, "you certainly can't go all the way to Heart o' the Town. It would be dark before you got home."

"And if you go back now, stopping at houses on the way," said another, "you *might* be able to sell some stamps."

"Of course," said the first Giant, coming up, and getting larger and larger every minute, "Marie's mother never dreamed of your going 'way to Heart o' the Town. And think how foolish you'll feel tomorrow when the children ask you how many stamps you've sold, to have to say none—you, who were going to win all the prizes!"

Suddenly Johnny seemed to wake up. What had he done! By stopping and listening, and almost giving in, he had opened the way for a whole crowd of Giants who had followed him all the way to Middle Street. What, oh, *what* if they should go farther, and finally get as far as

Heart o' the Town! What would the Angel think! He blinked his eyes, and called, "Come quick, Angel, I need you!" Then he turned square around.

"Oh, I know you, old Giant Break-Your-Promise!" he said, crooking his left arm as though it carried a shield, and closing his right hand over what might have been a spear. "I know you, and you can come right ahead and fight, if you want to. I'm going to Heart o' the Town Hall to get Mr. Brown, and if you think you're going along with me, it's April Fool for you! You'll never get into Heart o' the Town because of me! Well, where are you? Come on and fight, I'm in a hurry!"

But there wasn't a single Giant left. Not one. They had grown so small that there wasn't even enough left of them to go back home. They had just shriveled up and died when Johnny faced them and dared to fight.

Johnny pulled down his cap and started to run again, and he never stopped until he reached Heart o' the Town Hall, found Mr. Brown, and gave him his message.

"Whew!" Mr. Brown whistled. "How long ago did she send you?"

"I ran 'most all the way," said Johnny simply.

"Well, I hope she hasn't tried to put in any water her-

self. I'll go straight up there," and he jumped on a Forest Gate Street car.

As for Johnny, he put his hands in his pockets and whistled. He had done his errand and did not need to run any more. He knew he had lost his best chances at selling stamps, but, strangely enough, he seemed much more interested just now in Mr. Brown's getting to Marie's before anything happened. He walked straight up Forest Gate Street to Good Neighborhood Street.

All the way children called to him, "How many stamps have you sold?" And each time he would answer proudly, "I haven't had time to sell any. I've been doing an important errand."

When he reached Marie's house her mother met him at the door.

"Johnny," she said, "I can never thank you enough for what you have done. I was so afraid you couldn't find Mr. Brown that I finally went down cellar myself to let in some water. Mr. Brown came that very minute, and said if I'd done it, the boiler would have exploded. Will you sell me twenty-five of your stamps?"

As Johnny tore off the number she wanted, she said, "I know your mother is proud of you, Johnny. You keep

your promises. And Good Neighborhood Street is proud of you, too. Thank you for helping Marie and me."

"You're welcome," he said. "I ought to thank you for buying my stamps."

"I'm afraid they're the only ones you'll sell, Johnny."

Johnny was half-way down the walk. "I don't care," he said, and waved his cap to Marie in the window.

It was a short time after that the Neighborhood Angel invited the children of the street to the Tower Room. They came eagerly, as always, and could hardly wait to see their shields. Some of them had been trying especially hard.

It did seem as if more shields than usual were bright. But suddenly, "Oh, *look!*" came an excited cry, and every one turned toward Johnny.

"What's the matter?" asked Johnny.

Every child was pointing straight at his shield. He looked down. The same sort of glow came from the center of his shield as had come from Sammy's. With shining eyes he looked up at the Neighborhood Angel, for he knew that he had won his star.

X

ROSA MONDELLA'S CHRISTMAS STOCKING

If I were in old Santa's place,
I know what I would do;
I'd ask my friends, the boys and girls,
To help me, wouldn't you?

In a few weeks it would be Christmas.

When the children of Anytown went to Busy Street or Main Street they could hardly get past the store windows, there were so many interesting things in them. And Santa Claus was at Wharton's. All you had to do to see him was to take the elevator to the toy floor, and there he was, patting boys and girls on the back, asking them what they wanted for Christmas, and making everybody laugh and wish they could just live at Wharton's.

The children of Good Neighborhood Street had a special reason for being excited, for Santa Claus had promised to come to their party. Every year there was a party at the Good Neighborhood Street church, where

the children played games and then planned what they should do for their real Christmas celebration. And this year Santa Claus had promised that he would come and help them plan.

They were just fixing the chairs for Going to Jerusalem when a jingle of bells was heard. Santa Claus had come before he was expected. The children flew to the door to greet him.

"Well, well! I'm glad to see you!" he said jovially, "*particularly* glad! I heard there was a party here to make plans for Christmas, and you know,"—he leaned forward confidentially, and his eyes twinkled—"I'm a little bit interested in Christmas myself."

He told it as if it were great news, and the children all laughed. As if they didn't know Santa Claus was interested in Christmas!

"You ought to see my shop," he went on, wagging his head.

"My, I wish we could!" said Teddy.

But Santa Claus said, "It wouldn't make you a bit happy. If you could see the *hundreds* of presents there isn't time to finish! And every day, when children come to me down at Wharton's to tell me what they want, I think

of the things I'd like to give them, and remember that they won't be ready."

Horrors! Did he mean that some children would have to go without any Christmas presents, then?

Santa Claus seemed to know what was in their minds. "You boys and girls here wouldn't need to worry if I never got around to you, for your fathers and mothers and grandmothers always help me out so much, but unless something happens it looks to me as though a lot of children down on Middle Street and Busy Street and Main Street were going to wake up on Christmas morning and find nothing in their stockings. There simply aren't enough things to go around!"

The children gasped at the awful thought. Think of finding nothing in your stocking Christmas morning!

"I was telling all this to Mr. Wharton," Santa Claus went on, "and he was worried, too, but he finally said, 'Well, you're a Good Fellow, Santa Claus; you'll be able to find a way out.' I said at once, 'It will take more than one Good Fellow to do this job,' and then I happened to think of this party where you children were meeting to make Christmas plans. 'H'm,' said I to myself, 'if I go

up and explain to them, maybe they'll be Good Fellows with me, and help me with this thing.' You see, I knew the name of your street was Good Neighborhood Street."

"It is," the children declared. "Tell us what to do. We'll help you, Santa Claus!"

"Hooray!" said Santa Claus, "then *that's* settled!" And tugging at his pack he pulled out a great pile of stockings.

"You know Mr. Fullerton, the newspaper editor?" he asked, as he gave each child one of the stockings. "Well, Mr. Fullerton says he'll get the names and ages of all the children I couldn't provide for, and if you'll write in to him and say you want to be a Good Fellow, he'll understand, and send you one of those names."

The children were delighted. Wouldn't it be fun to fill a whole stocking for some one! To help Santa Claus like this was almost like being Santa Claus oneself!

And when he told them that on Christmas Eve in the church on Busy Street a Christmas party was always held, they said, "We could go to the party and give them the stockings then. And we could see their faces!"

They all liked the idea so much that they sat down at once around tables which Miss Helpful and her assistants

pulled out, and began choosing things to make. The girls all chose Raggedy Ann dolls, and the boys all wanted to make wooden toys like the patterns Santa Claus showed them. He left, very much pleased, but the children stayed and worked all the afternoon.

Ethel's doll was all made but the face and hair, and when Miss Helpful had painted it, Ethel held it up.

"Oh," she cried. "I want it myself, I want it myself! Don't give it away, I want it myself!"

"That's a funny way to be a Good Fellow," said Lawrence and Ted and Annie, so Ethel said no more about wanting the doll herself. But she decided to keep it all the same, and buy presents for the stocking. As soon as she reached home she emptied her bank and counted her money. There was fifty cents, and when she told her father and mother about Santa Claus' visit, and said that she wanted to be a Good Fellow, her father gave her fifty cents more, which made a whole dollar. She could hardly wait for the next Saturday to come, so that she could spend it.

When it was spent she could hardly wait to get home and look at her packages. The first box she opened held a little Japanese doll. It was just big enough to go into her

doll-house. She thought she would play with it a while herself. Then came some little wooden dishes. She had bought those and the laundry set because she could wrap up each thing separately, and it would make more packages for the stocking. But now she forgot about the stocking. The things seemed to fit into her doll-house as though they were made for it, even the doll's bureau, which she had thought would be too big. She *must* keep them herself!

Somehow, too, the jackstones and rubber ball found their way to Ethel's own toy shelf, and the crayons. She wanted to try the crayons, so she did, until two or three of them broke. There was a bag of candy which she dipped into, first just to taste, and then because it was too good to let alone. The toy wrist watch looked so pretty on her own wrist that she decided to keep it and wear it always. And the paper doll set was so inviting that she just could not seem to help cutting out the dresses and trying them on the doll.

"Come, Ethel, it's time for bed," her mother said, coming in, and then, "Why, Ethel! Aren't those the things for Rosa Mondella?"

Rosa Mondella was the name Mr. Fullerton had sent

when Ethel had written him that she wanted to be a Good Fellow. "Rosa Mondella, 21 Middle Street, seven years old," the card had said.

"Yes, mother," said Ethel, "but you see I found I needed them myself. I've wanted a doll's laundry set all my life, and—and—"

Her mother looked so unbelieving and so surprised that Ethel did not feel like going on, somehow.

"What was in here?" her mother asked, looking at the bag.

"Well, it was candy, mother. I didn't mean to eat it all. I just thought I'd taste."

Her mother helped her undress silently. She was thinking.

Just as Ethel was dropping off to sleep, she faintly heard a voice saying, "What can we do about it? I can't bear to think that our Ethel is growing selfish. I wonder where—ah, here it is! 'It is written.' "

Who was talking? Her mother, or the Angel? It was funny how sometimes you couldn't tell—but here Ethel drifted off to sleep.

When she awoke the next morning she went straight to the corner where her toys were kept. She wanted to see the

new dishes and laundry set and Japanese doll and bureau and jackstones and paper dolls.

The first thing her eye caught was a little white cardboard shield. Where had that come from? She hadn't seen it for a long time. In fact she hadn't thought about the words on it, "It is written," since the last time the Angel was with them. Was it the Angel she had heard last night? The voice had said something about growing selfish. What was the Angel doing there, anyway? Driving out the Giants? What Giants? And though no one was looking, Ethel hung her head. She supposed it was the Selfish Giants. Giants were funny things. You couldn't see them, but you knew they were there. Some of the other children had shriveled some up. She thought it would be fun, but she didn't know exactly how. She read the words on the shield.

Over the top of the doll-house hung Rosa Mondella's stocking. Ethel took it up and looked at it. How was she ever going to fill it? She hadn't any more money, and since she had decided to keep the toys herself and eaten the candy, there was nothing left to put in it. If Rosa Mondella depended on Ethel for presents, it was going to be a pretty slim Christmas for her.

Just to see how the stocking would have looked if she hadn't decided to keep the toys, she began to put them in, one after another. The bureau filled the foot. When the jackstones and ball and dishes and laundry set were in, the stocking was still only half full. It would never do to give Rosa that. Ethel took the wrist watch from her arm, and the Japanese doll from the doll-house, but they took up very little room in the stocking. She wondered if Rosa would like a harmonica. She hardly ever played hers. She put it in. There was a little basket her grandmother had given her Thanksgiving. She was using it for a scrap-basket in her doll-house, but she could spare it.

She looked at the shield again. She did wish that the Angel would come and tell her what to do next. Then she thought of the Raggedy Ann doll.

"I want it myself, I want it myself! Don't give it away! I want it myself!" whispered some of the Selfish Giants who had gone to sleep with her last night, and were waking up now.

Now Ethel had just wished hard for the Angel, and of course the Angel was there, but she didn't know it. And Angels and Giants can't be in the same place long at the same time, so that whisper wasn't very strong.

Ethel looked at the row of dolls sitting up against the wall. "I don't need it at all," she said, seizing Raggedy Ann so suddenly that whatever little Giants there were fell over backward.

The stocking was almost full, but thin. Really interesting stockings had lumps and bulges in them. What else could she find? She thought regretfully of the bag of candy, which would have made a nice lump, and the crayons which she had broken.

"I know," she exclaimed, and began to sing excitedly, "'Heigh-ho! for I know!'" as she danced into her mother's room.

"Mummy," she said, "were you going to give me candy for Christmas?"

"Yes, dear," said her mother promptly.

"Please may I have it to put into Rosa's stocking? Because I ate hers."

Her mother looked almost as surprised as she had been last night, but she said, "Certainly, dear," and went straight to the closet and took down a jar of hard candies.

"Goody!" said Ethel. "It'll make a big bulge. Daddy, were you going to give me something for Christmas that cost as much as colored crayons?"

"Well," said her father, "possibly."

"Well, will you give it to me now, *please?*" She knew it was against the rules to have her presents before Christmas, but this was important.

Her father looked at her mother and then took something down from the closet shelf. It was the most beautiful box of colored crayons you ever saw. There were twenty-four colors in all. Ethel had never seen such a box.

It certainly was a wonderful Christmas stocking. Wouldn't you think Ethel would have been satisfied with it now? But she stood with some paper dolls in her hands, wondering what she could do to make up for those. You remember that the night before she had spoiled them for giving away. What could she give Rosa in their place? She couldn't think of a single thing—unless—

She fairly flew into the next room.

"Daddy, mummy," she demanded, "do you think maybe Santa Claus was going to give me a present this year?"

"I shouldn't be surprised," her father answered.

"Then if I write a letter about what I want, will you send it to him?"

"Yes," said her mother, and gave Ethel a pencil and paper.

She went back to her room and sat down at her desk. As she finished she looked at the Angel's shield again, and thought of the Giants.

"I'd kind of like to shrivel one up," she thought.

"Bless you!" said a voice somewhere around—though Ethel couldn't see any one—"you've been shriveling them all the morning. And since your letter they haven't a ghost of a chance!"

For this is what Ethel had written:

"Dear Santa Claus,

"Never mind about bringing me a present this year, Santa Claus. My Daddy and Mummy will take care of me. Please take my present instead to Rosa Mondella, 21 Middle Street, 7 years old.

"Your loving

"Ethel."

XI

HOW MARIE BECAME A GOOD FELLOW

When an Angel is one of your very best friends,
It's easier, far, to do right;
You're perfectly safe from a Giant attack,
For there's rarely a Giant in sight.

Usually Marie did not mind being lame, so many nice things happened to her just because she was different from other children. People were always giving her what she called "un-Christmas presents," which had nothing at all to do with Christmas, but which might come at any moment, like fruit, and flowers, and her toy village. Uncle Will had sent her the village in September, and all the fall she had played with it, arranging the little houses and stores on a board in her lap. The Good Neighborhood Street children who were always popping in unexpectedly loved to play with it too. It would provide amusement for the whole winter.

You might think that Marie would feel left out when the others went to the Tower Room and had such won-

derful times with the Angel. Perhaps she would have, if the children had not taken pains to tell her all that happened, and if she could never see the Angel herself.

But the fact was, the Neighborhood Angel knew and loved Marie quite as much as any child on the street, and visited her oftener, because she needed him more.

Sometimes the children pitied Marie because she must always stay at home. "No picnics, no vacation trips, no parties, no school, no Tower Room! Poor Marie!" they would say.

They did not understand that when children have to miss things of one kind, their guardian angel almost always makes up for the loss by arranging something just as nice of another kind, which other children do not have.

They did not know that in the night, when Good Neighborhood Street was dark and the people slept, the Angel came to Marie and told her wonderful stories, touching her eyes and ears so that she could see fairy sights, and hear music not heard by others. They did not know that he often took the little girl in his arms and bore her away to other places. Sometimes they went to the Tower Room, where she could see how bright her shield was growing; sometimes he flew with her far up among the clouds, so

that she felt like a bird and was sorry when morning came and she had to come back.

It may be that you would have called them dreams, these adventures she had with the Angel, but Marie's mother never did. She understood, and thanked the Father of all children for letting her little girl spend so much time with his Angel.

From across the street Jimmy bounded in. From next door Lawrence and Martha Hadley followed. They carried toys under their arms, and had come to tell Marie about Santa Claus being at their party, and about the Good Fellows, and about—but they all talked at once, and so fast that Marie laughed and said she couldn't understand a single word, and please to take turns! So they took turns, until there wasn't a thing that had happened at the party that Marie did not know about. She felt exactly as if she had been there.

"Oh, I want to be a Good Fellow!" she cried, when they finished. It would be such fun to help Santa Claus out. "Couldn't I be a Good Fellow?"

The children looked doubtful.

"Santa Claus didn't leave a stocking for you, Marie,"

said Martha gently. "I guess he thought you couldn't."

"You see," went on Jimmy, "you have to make the things down at the church. The saws and the wood and the paint are all there."

"And the stuffing for the dolls. And Miss Helpful has to paint in the faces," added Martha.

"Maybe you could buy some presents for a stocking," suggested Lawrence hopefully.

Marie shook her head. "I haven't any money," she said, "and if I had, I couldn't go down town and choose the things."

There seemed to be no way for Marie to be a Good Fellow. The others were sorry—it was going to be such heaps of fun.

At last Martha said, "But Marie, you don't need to be a Good Fellow. There will be enough of us. Why, probably people will be Good Fellows to you. Everybody gives you presents."

" 'Course they do," agreed the boys. "You needn't worry." And they went home thinking they left Marie happy again.

But Marie was far from happy. How she wanted to be a Good Fellow! Not because all the other children were

doing it, but because she was missing such a good time. It's so much fun to have things to give away—twice as much as getting them. She went over the list of her own toys to see if any were good enough to pass on, but the playthings which could be put into a stocking had all been used so much that the newness was entirely worn off.

For once Marie wished she could be like other children, and do what other children did. How she would have loved to hear Santa Claus tell about his shop! In her mind she could see his work-rooms, littered with half-finished toys which would not be done in time for Christmas. Oh, how she wished she could be a Good Fellow and help him!

She was wishing it so hard that she forgot to be glad when bedtime came, and wonder if the Angel would visit her that night.

The Angel did not forget her. As soon as the last light on Good Neighborhood Street went out, in at Marie's window he slipped, and put his hand in hers.

Marie loved to fly with the Angel. She always felt so safe, and happy, and well. She forgot about her lame back, and it was now quite easy for her to walk, or fly, or run.

"Where are we going, Angel?" Marie asked, as they

flew out over the wall of Anytown, across the river, and up, up, toward the stars; over the mountains and far beyond.

"It's a surprise," answered the Angel, smiling at her.

To the north they flew, on, and on, and on, and finally came to what looked like the top of the world.

"It's the North Pole," explained the Angel.

"The North Pole?" echoed Marie. "Then it must be where Santa Claus lives. O Angel, that—that house down there isn't Santa Claus', is it? Oh, I've always wondered what it would be like!" And down they dropped at the jolly old saint's very door.

Marie ran up the steps and knocked. No answer.

"He's down at Wharton's," she said, "and probably the brownies are just worn out and have gone to sleep."

She opened the door and they went inside. It was as she thought. On tables, chairs, hobby-horses, benches, velocipedes, in every corner, every crack, slept the little brownie workmen, with their tools in their hands as though they had just dropped off.

"My, what lots of toys!" exclaimed Marie. "But it's just as Santa Claus said. See, Angel, they're not *nearly* ready!"

From room to room they wandered, hardly knowing

where to step because of the piles of unfinished toys. Suddenly Marie spied a corner of finished ones. They were tagged, and she hurried over to read the tags.

The first one was on a kiddy-kar. It said, "Pietro Martelli, 32 Middle Street, Anytown. *Don't Deliver.* Broken leg."

The next was on a velocipede, and read, "Paul Petrowski, 50 Busy Street, Anytown. *Don't Deliver.* Rheumatism."

Then came some books marked, "Edith and Frances Kelly, 18 Main Street, Anytown. *Don't Deliver.* Eyes being treated."

A tool-chest was marked, "Karl Unger, 14 Middle Street, Anytown. *Don't Deliver.* Broken arm."

A roller coaster was marked, "Christina Peterson, 12 Main Street, Anytown. *Don't Deliver.* Hurt foot."

As Marie studied the tags with wonder she asked, "Why won't they be delivered, Angel?"

"Because," said the Angel, "these children are in the hospital, and the toys would only make them feel unhappy. They'd be of no use to sick children."

"But what will they have, then?" Marie asked again. "There won't be any other things done in time for them, will there?"

"Maybe some Good Fellow will help out," suggested the Angel.

"But those stockings are all for Middle Street, and Busy Street, and Main Street. I don't believe anybody has thought of the children in the hospital."

"That would be a great pity," the Angel replied.

"It would be awful," declared Marie. "Can't we tell the Good Fellows?"

"The trouble is," said the Angel, "it's so hard to find toys that sick children can play with."

"I know," said Marie. "That's what mother says. That's why my Uncle Will sent me my village. I wish there was a village to give them, Angel."

They looked everywhere, but there seemed to be no villages.

"Just one village, if it was like mine," she continued, "would be enough for lots of children. There are so many buildings each one could have four or five, and perhaps sometimes they could play with it all together."

"It would be very nice," said the Angel, "but I don't see any about, do you? Bless me, it's nearly morning! Shall we go?"

And back they flew under the stars.

It seemed to Marie that she had barely touched the pillow again when her mother's voice awakened her.

"O mother," she cried, "guess where I've been! To the North Pole, to Santa Claus' house! None of the children ever went to his house, mother. All they've seen is just Santa Claus."

"You will always see more than other children, darling. What was it like up there?"

Marie told her about the piles and piles and rooms and rooms of unfinished toys, and the brownies all asleep from weariness.

"And mother," she said, "there was one pile of things for some children in Anytown, but they were all marked 'Don't Deliver,' because those children are in the hospital and couldn't use them. I wish I could be a Good Fellow to them. They may be left out. O mother, why can't I do the things the rest of the children do? Everybody just gives me presents, and I never have any fun doing things for anybody else!"

Marie's mother kissed her little girl to comfort her, and put on her soft, woolly wrapper before she carried her to the couch in the next room.

There on the table was Marie's big lap-board, on which

she was playing yesterday with her village. Marie looked regretfully at it now, as she thought of how she and the Angel had searched Santa Claus' house in vain for one like it to give to the hospital children.

Suddenly she stared at it with wide-open eyes as if she had never seen it before. What was the matter with this one? Why couldn't she give away her village? Why hadn't she thought of it before? Oh, she could be a Good Fellow, she could, she could, she could!

"Mother!" she sang out happily, "I can give *my* village to the children in the hospital! I *can* be a Good Fellow!"

Her mother glanced at the shining face.

"You play with it every day, yourself," she reminded her.

"But I've played with it ever since September, mother, and it's somebody else's turn. It's nearly Christmas and Uncle Will will be sending me something else. Oh, *please* telephone Mr. Fullerton and say I'll be a Good Fellow to the hospital!"

Wasn't it nice that she thought of it in time?

You won't be surprised to hear that the next time the Angel took the shields out of the Tower Room closet

Marie's was so bright that it dazzled everybody's eyes.

"Isn't it pretty!" admired Annie.

"It isn't because she drove away any Giants, though," Jimmy said, " 'cause there never are any Giants around her."

"That's because she's with the Angel so much," said Martha wisely. "They never get a chance."

"That's right," replied the other children, "they never get a chance."

"I Can Give My Village to the Children in the Hospital!"

XII

ANYTOWN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

I think it would be fun, if what the Angel said is true,
To start some pleasant, happy ways, and watch them
spread, don't you?

You know "contagious" means "catching." Isn't it lucky that nice things are just as contagious as horrid ones, such as measles? For instance, you can catch good manners, like whooping-cough, by being near some one who has them, and taking them yourself. You can spread happiness and kindness and generosity just as easily as you can spread a cold when you sneeze ker-choo and forget to cover your face with your handkerchief.

The story of Anytown's first community Christmas is the most contagious story I know. See if you don't think so, too.

It all began with Marie's deciding to give her village to the hospital. That was on Saturday.

Sunday morning the Good Neighborhood Street children sang cheerily, in their church school,

"Singing, singing all the day,
Give, oh, give away!"

It made Jimmy remember something, and as soon as they were out-of-doors he said to the others, "What do you think? Marie's going to give away her village!"

"Her toy village?" the children gasped, "that she plays with every day?"

"Yep. To the hospital."

"Whew!" whistled Lawrence, and "My goodness!" Martha exclaimed. "What for?"

"Well, she can't make anything, and she just had to help Santa Claus somehow."

"Seems to me she's the best Good Fellow of all," remarked Clark. "We're not doing as much as that. I wonder—"

"I've got an idea!" interrupted the Boy with the Red Cap, and ran quickly across the street to ask his mother if he couldn't give away his velocipede. He wouldn't need it any more, for his father had promised him a bicycle for Christmas.

Findley and the Swinnertons and Teddy and Louise and all the rest went right home to think up something

special which they could do which hadn't occurred to them before.

That's how it began to spread.

As soon as dinner was over, Ethel ran across her back yard to see her best friend, Laura Bell.

"What do you think?" Ethel said to Laura Bell. "Marie's going to give her village to the hospital, because she can't make anything and she just had to help Santa Claus somehow."

Laura Bell's eyes opened wide. She knew all about the wonderful village. And now Marie was giving it away! It made her wonder if she hadn't something—when Frederick, Laura Bell's brother, passed the door.

"What do you think?" Laura Bell asked him. "Marie's going to give her village to the hospital, because she couldn't make anything like the Good Fellows, and she just had to help Santa Claus somehow."

"H'm," said Frederick, but a minute later you might have heard him say to Artie, who lived across the street, "You know that little lame girl, Marie? Well, everybody on Good Neighborhood Street, you know, is helping Santa Claus this year. Marie couldn't make or buy anything and she just had to help him somehow, so what do

you think? She's giving her village to the hospital."

"Let's do something ourselves," said Artie, after a moment.

"What?" asked Frederick.

"I don't know," said Artie, "but why couldn't we get all the children on our street to be Good Fellows, or something, just like Good Neighborhood Street? Let's ask mother."

Do you see how it was spreading?

Before school the next day Artie's mother sent him to a store on River Gate Street to get some note paper. She and Artie had decided to invite all the Next-to-the-Nicest Street children to their house to make plans.

Into the store came Benny Brown, of Middle Street.

"Hello," Artie greeted him.

"Hello," returned Benny. "What you going to do with all that paper?"

"It's for invitations," answered Artie.

"Party?"

"Sort of. The Good Neighborhood Street children heard that Santa Claus needed a lot of help this year, so they're all pitching in. One little lame girl couldn't make or buy anything, so she's giving away her own best

toy. She just had to do something. So our street's going to help, too."

"I'm going to tell our teacher," decided Benny, starting at once for school. (It was the Middle Street school, between Oak and Maple Streets.)

Miss Mason was the very best teacher in the world to tell interesting news. She listened until he was all through.

"And if the other streets are helping, seems as if we had to do something too," he ended.

"Of course we must, Benny," she said. "Let's tell the other grades about it right off, and get them to help."

It was so catching.

The Middle Street children went home and told their fathers and mothers, and they caught it, too. Billy Elwell's father, who kept a livery stable, offered to get the tallest tree in the forest for the Busy Street Christmas party.

The next Sunday, in the Busy Street church, the minister announced that the party would be on Christmas Eve. And you should have seen the children's eyes grow big when he said that the Good Neighborhood Street boys and girls wanted to come, for they were planning a surprise.

There was great excitement afterwards. The Good Neighborhood Street children were coming to their party —with a surprise! Whatever could the Busy Street children do to give them a good time? Nobody could suggest anything until Miss Smith asked if they'd like to act a Christmas play for their guests. Miss Smith knew one called "The Toy Shop," where all the characters were dolls, and tin soldiers, and jumping-jacks, and toy animals.

"Oh, let's!" the children cried. "They'd love to see a play. Can we all be in it?"

But the contagion did not stop here.

Somehow Mr. Fullerton, the newspaper man, found out that the tree which Mr. Elwell brought in from the forest was taller than the church, and he wrote a funny article in his paper and said that the only way the Busy Street church could be used for that Christmas party was by lifting off the roof to make room for the tree, and then pushing away the walls to make room for the crowds that wanted to go to it.

And he wrote, "The spirit of Christmas is catching. A few weeks ago Santa Claus was afraid he wouldn't have enough help. Today he has so much that he says the only

place big enough to hold all his helpers is Heart o' the Town Hall. If this is so, why not move the Busy Street Christmas party from the church to Heart o' the Town Hall, and since every one in Anytown is working for it, call it a community Christmas party and invite everybody?"

When people read the article the next morning, they said to each other, "It's a good idea," and began to work harder than ever over the preparations.

So the tree was set up in Heart o' the Town Hall. It was so tall it touched the ceiling. Hundreds of colored lights were strung through its branches until it was like a fairy tree. Every night for a week before Christmas it was lighted, and people could see it twinkling through the windows.

To the hotel on Main Street came, three days before Christmas, a company of musicians. There was one little girl among them, Gretchen, the daughter of the director. It is never very nice to be in a strange place for Christmas, but the men in the company thought it must be especially hard for a little girl with no mother. They were wondering what they could do for a special treat for her, when a letter came to them. It was from Anytown's entertain-

ment committee, and invited all the strangers to their Christmas party.

"Oh, *aren't* Anytown people nice to ask us? aren't they *nice?*" little Gretchen kept repeating. "I wish we could do something for them."

She and her father, that evening, walked over to Heart o' the Town to watch the lights twinkle through the windows. There were other children there, pressing their noses against the windows, eyes sparkling in anticipation.

"It's going to be a bully party," one little boy observed; "presents and things to eat, and a play."

"All of us children on Busy Street are giving the play," remarked another. "What are you doing for it?"

The first boy shook his head.

"Don't know what to do. I live on Main Street, over Goldberg's store, and none of us children can think of anything to do. We've thought and thought."

Gretchen seized her father's hand.

"Father!" she whispered, "did you hear what that boy said? Couldn't we—" and eagerly she asked him a question.

Gretchen's father walked over to the Main Street boy.

"Can you get together all the children on Main Street,"

he said, "and come to the hotel tomorrow morning at ten?"

When he explained why, the small boy shouted, "Whoop-ee! Guess I can!" and ran to spread the good news.

Up on Good Neighborhood Street the children could hardly contain themselves for joy.

Marie was going to the Christmas party! The children said if it hadn't been for her, there might not have been a party. She just had to see, in Heart o' the Town, the happiness she had started on Good Neighborhood Street. Other people thought so too, and when Dr. Holman said he would take her down himself in the hospital ambulance, the children shouted, "Hooray!" for they knew Dr. Holman would take good care of her.

And what a party that was! Santa Claus was there, of course, with a pack on his back twice the size of himself, and with a sleigh full of presents besides. The Good Neighborhood Street children recognized some of the packages, and the stockings which hung upon the tree.

Oh, I wish you could have seen that tree! It sparkled so with its hundreds of colored lights, and the dozens and

dozens of bulgy, lumpy stockings looked so exciting! Besides all these things, there were yards and yards of festoons of gilded popcorn, while gilt and frosted walnuts, pine-cones and icicles hung on every tiniest twig. Why, those Next-to-the-Nicest Street children must have worked nights and used quarts of gold and silver paint; for the decorations were the gift of Next-to-the-Nicest Street.

Mountains of candy-boxes covered tables on one side, while on the other were tubs, baskets and boxes of fruit, raisins and nuts. The refreshments were the gift of Middle Street. Each child had started by contributing one orange or apple, but before they finished, all the fathers and mothers were sending them, too. And in the Middle Street school Miss Mason had helped the boys and girls make and mold pounds and pounds of delicious nut candy to fill the boxes.

Everybody knew what the Busy Street children were doing, and looked forward to the Toy Shop play. It was said that the merchants of the town gave all the costumes.

As the children and grown people were gazing upon the beautiful tree, the countless gifts, toys, fruit and candy, all at once there came floating in upon them the sound of music. Faint and far away it seemed at first, but as it came

nearer the people could distinguish children's voices, sweet and clear, and the strains of many violins.

"Who is it?" whispered one to another, as they looked about to discover who was missing from the company inside. But it was difficult to tell, among so many. A hush fell upon them all, and even the children stood quite still.

"Silent night! Holy night!"

sang the carolers, and those who listened thought of that still, starry night so many years ago, when the shepherds watched over their flocks in the fields near Bethlehem.

"How beautiful!" the people breathed, when it was over, and then were still again.

"Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head,"

sang the children outside, and in the great hall the people thought of the little Lord Jesus whose birthday they were celebrating.

Another pause; then the music started again. The clear voices rang out, very near the steps now,—

"Carol, children, carol,
Carol joyfully,
Carol the good tidings,
Carol merrily."

The door opened, and in came the carolers, singing still, followed by the musicians.

"The Main Street children!" whispered every one to his neighbor, and as the violinists and little Gretchen appeared, "Our guests from the hotel!"

Down to the tree they wound their way, encircling it at last.

"And pray a gladsome Christmas
To all your fellow men.
Carol, children, carol,
Christmas day again!"

It *was* a gladsome Christmas. How could it help being when every single person in Anytown, even the visitors, had done so much to make it so?

The carols, the presents, the tree, the decorations, the refreshments and the jolly play at the end were one and all gifts, beautiful gifts to each other, to Anytown, and to the Child whose birthday it was.

Aren't you glad Marie could see it all? And it didn't hurt her a bit.

"Were you there?" asked the children eagerly, the next time they saw the Angel. "Were you at our party?"

UPB

"Carol, children, carol; carol joyfully,
Carol the good tidings; carol merrily."

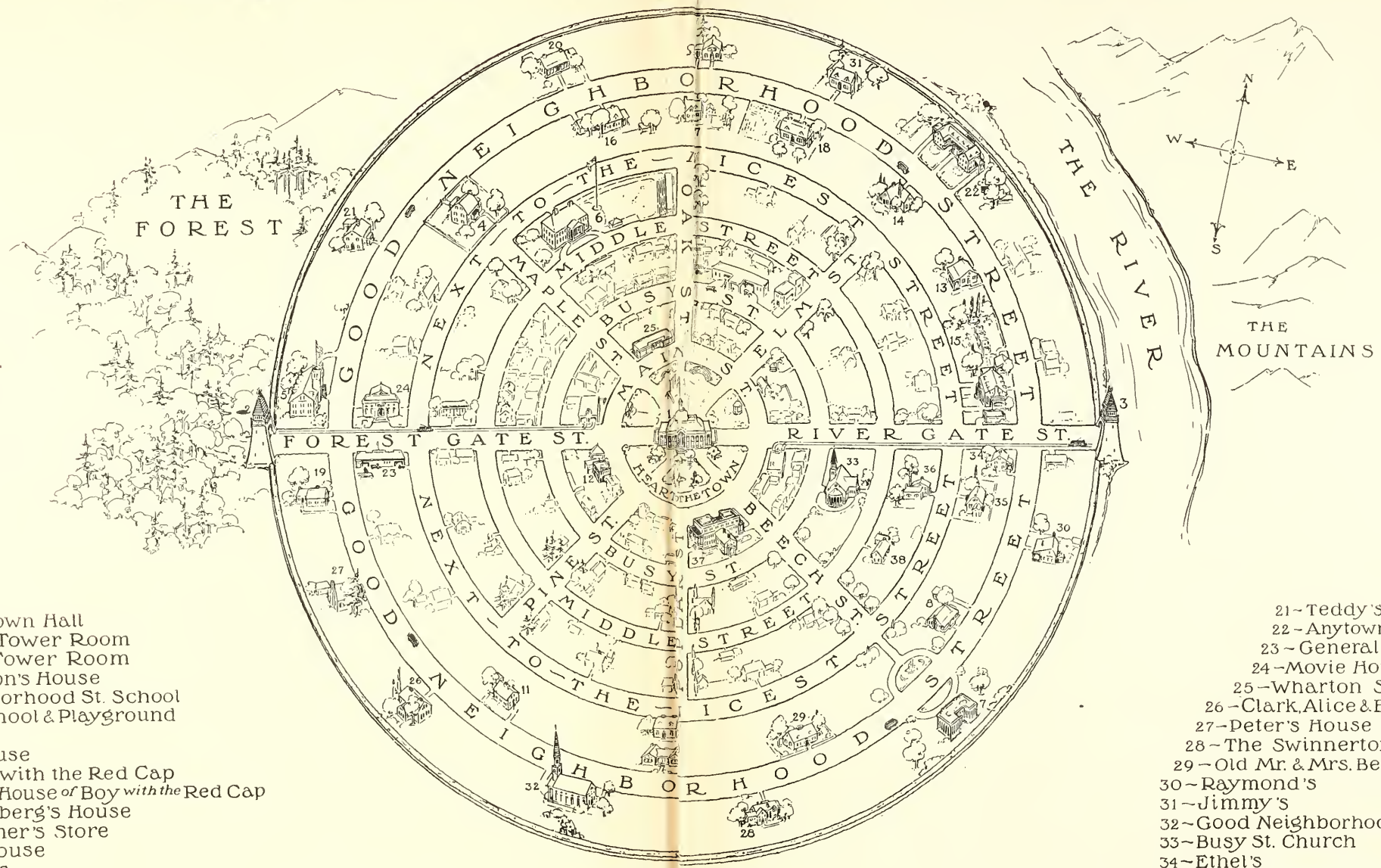
"You dear children!" said the Angel, "as if I could stay away when anything as important as that was happening! 'It is written,' you know. A poor sort of Angel I'd be not to be around when you're happy. Besides, I am so proud to think that it all started on Good Neighborhood Street. And I have something to tell you. There's no danger now about the name of your street being changed!"

"Truly?" the children asked eagerly.

"Truly," smiled the Angel. "For you're not only keeping the Giants where they belong, but you're starting beautiful ways on your street which are being taken up and copied by all the other streets.

"*And that,*" he ended impressively, "*is the very best thing a good neighbor can do!*"

MAP OF ANYTOWN



1~Heart o' the Town Hall
2~Forest Gate Tower Room
3~River Gate Tower Room
4~Molly & Morton's House
5~Good Neighborhood St. School
6~Middle St. School & Playground
7~Library
8~Findley's House
9~House *of* Boy with the Red Cap
10~House *in back of* House *of* Boy *with the* Red Cap
11~Sammy Goldberg's House
12~Sammy's Father's Store
13~Hamilton's House
14~Miss Helpful's
15~Mr. Richman's
16~Marie's
17~Lawrence Hadley's House
18~Mr. Friendly's
19~Emy's
20~Lobe's
21~Teddy's
22~Anytown Hospital
23~General Store
24~Movie House
25~Wharton Store
26~Clark, Alice & Bobby Frayser's
27~Peter's House
28~The Swinnerton's
29~Old Mr. & Mrs. Belding's
30~Raymond's
31~Jimmy's
32~Good Neighborhood St. Church
33~Busy St. Church
34~Ethel's
35~Laura Belle's & Frederick's
36~Artie's
37~Anytown Hotel
38~Mr. Brown's